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JOHN MALDONATUS

ON THE HOLY GOSPELS



A COMMENTARY  
ON THE  
HOLY GOSPELS

BY  
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S. MATTHEW'S GOSPEL, CHAPTERS XV. TO THE END

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# THE GOSPEL OF S. MATTHEW.

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## CHAPTER XV.

CHRIST REPROVES THE SCRIBES—HE CURES THE DAUGHTER OF THE WOMAN OF CHANAAH AND MANY OTHERS, AND FEEDS FOUR THOUSAND WITH SEVEN LOAVES.

Verse 1. *Then.*

WHEN He had done so many miracles (S. Chrysostom, *Hom.* lii.). S. John (vii. 1) seems to say that Christ had returned to Galilee at this time.

*From Jerusalem.*

The Scribes and Pharisees, say S. Chrysostom, Euthymius, and Leontius, were dispersed through all the tribes. But those of Jerusalem were the most arrogant of any, because they lived in the capital city, and were considered the wisest of all. They should rather have said, through all the cities, or all places, as says Theophylact; because after the return from Babylon, there were only two tribes. On the Scribes and Pharisees see chap. ii. 4. The opinion of some, that these were sent from a council of the Scribes and Pharisees of Jerusalem to tempt Christ, appears credible, and in accordance with their dispositions and habits. For in chap. xxii. 16, they sent their disciples with the Herodians to Christ with the same intent.

Verse 2. *Why do Thy disciples.*

S. Mark (vii. 2), says that they made this act of the disciples the cause of an accusation.

*Transgress the tradition of the elders.*

They do not say, writes S. Chrysostom (*Hom.* lii.), that they transgressed the Law, because the Law says nothing on the subject; but the tradition of the elders, which S. Mark (vii. 3, 4) states at greater length. They do not call it their own tradition, although it was such, but the tradition of the elders, that by the authority of these and the antiquity of the traditions they might load Christ and the disciples with ill-will. Nor do they say, "Why dost not thou wash?" when Christ probably did not wash more than the disciples, but, "Why do not Thy disciples?" either because they did not venture to accuse Him, or because by accusing the disciples they might appear to attack Him more bitterly: as in chap. ix. 14, they do not say "Thou," but, "Thy disciples".

Verse 3. *Why do you also.*

He said nothing of the tradition of washing the hands, lest, if He pressed it, He might seem to approve it; or if He blamed it, He might unnecessarily have incurred ill-will—as S. Chrysostom and Euthymius observe.

Verse 4. *Honour thy father and mother.*

The observation of S. Jerome on this passage, which Bede has borrowed from him, is true, that honour in Holy Scripture is not shown so much by salutations and performance of duties as in alms and the giving of gifts, as in 1 *Timothy* v. 3; that is, in ecclesiastical alms. The same thing is taught in this place; for Christ opposed to the honour of parents their saying to them: "The gift,

whatsoever proceedeth from Me, shall profit thee ; that is, refusing them help. It appears much more clearly from *S. Mark* vii. 12. To do something, therefore, for father and mother—that is, to aid them—is to honour them.

*He that shall curse.*

Christ did not cite the whole law, nor one precept only, but two. For “Honour” is in *Exodus* xx. 12, the latter part of which is omitted as not to the purpose. “He that shall curse,” is in chap. xxi. 16. Why Christ added this, when the question was not one of words, but of deeds, is doubtful. S. Chrysostom thinks that it was to teach us the value before God of honouring our parents, when one who injures them only in words is punished by death. But Bede thinks that, as in the former clause, the word “honour” means that honour which consists not of words but deeds, so the word “curses” means not the wrong done in words, but in deeds, by refusing them their rightful aid. But it is clear from the custom of the law that the word should be taken in its proper sense. The opinion of S. Chrysostom is therefore the more probable.

Verse 5. *The gift whatsoever proceedeth from me shall profit thee.*

This is a difficult and much controverted passage. The best way will, perhaps, be to give the views of the chief authorities upon it.

1. Some think the passage complete and perfect.
2. Other take it as an elliptic or defective speech.

The former understand it thus : “Whoever says, that is, is able to say, ‘The gift whatsoever proceedeth from me shall profit thee,’ means, ‘Whatever I give to God profits you also, as if it had been given by you.’” So says Hugo, among other explanations that he offers.

Others, more modern, say that the Greek does not allow



this, because it is not *ἕκαστος*, "each one," but *ὁς ἄν*, which requires a correlative.

3. Those who read it as a deficient sentence say : (a) Some, that it is so only in one respect (*in uno loco*), that the "whosoever" has nothing to answer to it, as its nature requires.

(b) Others, that it is so in two respects. In the one just stated, and also because with the word "gift" the verb substantive is wanting to make the meaning. "It is a gift, that is, a thing consecrated to God, whatsoever part of my property might have benefited you." Thus, some of old explain it as S. Chrysostom does : "I owe you nothing, but if anything of mine can benefit you, it is a gift ; that is, I give it you, not as a debt, but as a gift".

(c) Others again take it interrogatively, "Is it a gift?" or, with a note of admiration, as if they should say, "By no means" (*minime*), as S. Thomas in the Catena.

4. Others again, Whoever says it (is) a gift, that is, whatever of mine might have benefited you, has been dedicated to God. In this way S. Chrysostom, Euthymius, and Theophylact explain it ; only that Theophylact says that it was the custom of the Scribes and Pharisees to persuade children to offer all their goods to the Temple, that if their parents asked them for anything afterwards they might answer, that they could not give it, because all their property had been consecrated to God. But this is not credible, even of the Jews, the most avaricious of men. Besides, in this way, they would not have been able to make use even of what was their own. S. Chrysostom and Euthymius think that the children used to utter untruths when they said that they had given to God what their parents asked them for, that they might avoid giving it them ; and thus, by a double wickedness, they cheated both God and their parents. We might believe that others did this but we can hardly believe that such a thing was done

by the advice of the Scribes and Pharisees, because, as we have said, they had no reason for such a thing; and there was a double wickedness in it. Christ blames what the Scribes and Pharisees taught the people to do, and it is very likely, *per se*, that they who wished to appear the most religious of all men taught nothing except under the show of religion.

S. Jerome gives two explanations. (1) He says: "You say whoever wishes to give to God what he was about to give to his parents, is free". This does not agree closely enough with the words of Christ. (2) "What I was going to offer to God, I expend, my father, on your maintenance." But it can hardly be received as the teaching of the Scribes and Pharisees. For this was not to dishonour their parents, but to complain that by defrauding God they honoured them; while Christ accused the Scribes and Pharisees that, under the pretence of honouring God, they dishonoured their parents, as immediately follows: "And he shall not honour his father or his mother".

The explanation of Strabus, Hugo, and De Lyra is: "The gift whatsoever proceedeth from me (that is, whatsoever I offer to God), shall profit thee just as if I had given it to thee. It is better, therefore, to offer it to God than to give it to thee." The whole sentence, and all the expressions in it, seem to agree with this and *S. Mark* vii. 11, 12: "But you say, If a man shall say to his father or mother, Corban (which is a gift), whatsoever is from me shall profit thee. And, farther, "You suffer him not to do anything for his father or mother," strongly confirms it. When He says: "You suffer him not to do anything for his father or his mother," he openly indicates by the words, "It is a gift," &c., that he has done, or has promised to do, something; and he is far from swearing that he will not benefit his father or his mother. The son, then, by the tradition of the Scribes and Pharisees, commands his father

to be content with his offering sacrifice for himself and his father, and to require nothing more. But they for whom the sacrifice was offered consumed it, unless it were a holocaust. In this way the father was benefited ; less, indeed, than he ought to have been ; but still he was benefited in some degree. It remains to be seen how Christ's words were fulfilled. There seems to be two ellipses. (1) "Whosoever," which almost all the commentators rightly fill up by the words, "shall be free from blame," "shall be innocent," "shall fulfil the injunctions about parents". (2) There is "the gift, the δῶρον, whatsoever proceedeth from me," which our version fills up sufficiently by the word "proceedeth". It would be more clear if we said : "Whatever shall come, or has come from me".

Verse 6. *And he shall not honour his father or his mother.*

Some think these not the words of the Scribes and Pharisees, but of Christ, as S. Mark (vii. 12). As if the meaning were : "So you forbid a man to honour his father or mother". But they are undoubtedly the words of the former, and the meaning is, therefore : "Whosoever shall say to his father or mother, 'The gift whatever proceedeth of me shall profit thee,' shall be free from blame, and need not honour his father or mother in one thing, even though he has not honoured them in another".

Verse 7. *Hypocrites.*

The Scribes and Pharisees no doubt were hypocrites, but it is not plain why Christ called them such here, when he was treating, not of hypocrisy, but of perverse doctrine. Euthymius says that it was because, when they wished to appear the most careful observers of the Law, they were transgressors of it through their traditions.

*Well hath Isaiah prophesied of you.*

Isaiah did not speak of the Scribes and Pharisees only, but of the whole people of the Jews; and not of that which was to be, but of that which then was. The words, therefore, are not so much those of prophecy as of accusation. But Christ applies them to the Scribes and Pharisees, meaning that the accusation of Isaiah of the Jews which then were, apply to the Scribes and Pharisees; so that He may appear not so much to have accused the people of that time, as to have prophesied of the Scribes and Pharisees that were to be—as in chap. xiii. 35.

Verse 8. *This people.*

The Greek reading is the same in all essential points as that of the Septuagint (*Isa.* xxix. 13). To approach God is to worship Him, as in *Psa.* cxlviii. 14. So, on the other hand, to be far from God is not to worship Him. The meaning, therefore, is: "This people worships Me with their lips, with their hearts they worship Me not". Our version does not read the first part of the verse, nor do any of the Greek or Latin authors, except Euthymius and Theophylact, as far as I know; and it is very likely that Christ only cited the part of *Isaiah* which applied to the subject of which He was speaking; that is, of honouring God.

Verse 9. *And in vain.*

The Hebrew of Isaiah is not "in vain," but **יראתם ותהי** אה "their face is toward Me"; that is, they fear Me; for in Hebrew to fear God is to worship Him; but he who worships God not as God teaches, but according to his own will, does so in vain and with no effect. The LXX., therefore, for explanation, added "in vain," unless we think that they perhaps read **ותהו** for **ותהי** or **יראמם אמי**

"Their fear is towards Me". They rendered it: "They worshipped Me," which S. Matthew has followed.

*Teaching doctrines and commandments of men.*

Doctrines which are not the commandments of God, but of men. Christ calls those traditions the traditions of men which are opposed to the commandments of God, מלמדה מצות אנשים "the learned precepts of men"; that is, such as were invented and handed down by men. The Septuagint and Latin both apparently read "doctrine" with other points מלמדה and translated it "doctrines," adding the word "and" in explanation, "teaching doctrines *and* commandments of men". The Evangelist transposed the words, if (as is often the case with citations from the Old and New Testaments) it were not the carelessness of the transcriber. The followers of Calvin cry upon this that Christ's words apply to us, who ascribe more to the traditions of men than to the Word of God; understanding neither what is the Word of God nor what the traditions of men.

As regards the meaning of this passage, traditions are of three kinds:

1. Those which God Himself has given, which have never been written, but which the Church has always observed, and handed down to us *vivâ voce*; such as the baptism of infants. The followers of Calvin practise this, although they can prove it by no testimony of the Word; although to us, properly speaking, because we can prove it, it is not tradition. These are not only not termed human traditions, but not even ecclesiastical traditions, because, although handed down by the Church, they were not constituted by the Church, but by God Almighty. So no one calls the Holy Scripture an ecclesiastical tradition, though preserved and handed down by the Church.

2. Of those things which the Church has not only

handed down, but even instituted, such as the observance of the Lord's Day, the Lent fast, abstinence on certain days from flesh : whoever calls these human traditions errs grievously, and knows not what the Church is. For they were not instituted by man, but had for their authority the Holy Ghost, who rules and governs the Church. So he would greatly err who called the apostolic decree of *Acts* xv. 20, which commanded to abstain from blood and things strangled, a human tradition. Yet that was not a divine but an ecclesiastical precept, because all the assembled Church decreed it. Therefore whatever the Church, afterwards assembled in the same way, defined is to be placed in the same class. For the Holy Ghost was both promised and exhibited not less to the Church than to the Apostles ; nay, even more : for He was given to the Apostles not for themselves alone, but for the Church : to the Church, not for the sake of the Apostles, but of herself, to teach her all truth, and to remain with her even to the end of the world. And that Spirit governs the Church no less now than He governed her Apostles in those days.

3. The third kind is of the things which are ordered neither by God nor by the Church, but either by the State or private persons. Of these there are two kinds : (a) Such as are not contrary to the precepts or counsel of God ; (b) such as are contrary to them.

Of the former Christ does not treat here ; but nearly all Scripture teaches us to obey them, if ordered by those who have authority ; for we owe them obedience. " Be subject of necessity, not only for wrath, but also for conscience' sake " (*Rom.* xiii. 5). Christ only speaks of those which cannot be kept without violating the commandments of God ; such as those of the Scribes and Pharisees, of which He says : " You have made void the commandment of God through your tradition ".

Verse 11. *Not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man.*

Christ, says S. Chrysostom, does not say that food does not defile, though He means that, but what enters into the mouth ; which may be understood of the defilement by unwashed hands, of which He was speaking ; lest if He directly mentioned food, they should be greatly offended. For with such religious scruples was the choice of food regarded, that even after the Resurrection Peter refused to eat (*Acts* x. 14).

*But what cometh out.*

Not that everything which proceeds out of the mouth of a man defiles him ; nor does everything which defiles proceed out of his mouth. For the praises of God proceed out of his mouth and do not defile, but rather justify him. And wicked and evil thoughts which the mind alone employs itself upon, in themselves defile a man, but do not proceed out of his mouth. But the meaning is : The things which defile a man, and either enter into or pass out through the mouth, do not defile because they enter, but because they pass out. And not because they merely pass out, for food is sometimes returned *per vomitum*, but because they proceed out of a heart defiled. This heart, therefore, the food or drink which is either taken immoderately or against the law of the Church defiles, not by entering, but by passing out. It proceeds out when the intemperate or disobedient mind comes forth into action, and not only wishes to take but actually takes and places in the mouth food or drink in immoderate quantities, or contrarily to the law of the Church. For the food in entering goes out, and not because it enters, but because it goes out, it defiles. Why did Christ add this so obscurely ? I suppose that He wished to use the antithesis of entering and passing out to mark the calumnious question of the Scribes and Pharisees, that He might indirectly show that



it was not His disciples by their unwashed hands, but the Scribes and Pharisees themselves by their malignant and calumnious words, that were defiled.

Verse 12. *Were scandalised.*

Because He appeared, as S. Chrysostom says, to speak of the choice of meats as ordered by the Law, and thereby to be destroying the Law itself.

Verse 13. *Every plant.*

Many authors of note understand doctrine by plant (Theophylact Alexandria, *Ep. Pasch.*, i. ; S. Hilary, Theophylact, Euthymius). Others take it of those who have good or bad wills (S. Athanasius, *Ep. on Syn. of Arim. and Seleuc.* ; S. Jerome, *in loc.* ; Prosper, *De vocat. Gent.*, i. 2 ; S. Augustin, *Ev. Quest.*, i. 17 ; Bede). Others, again, think that it means both men and doctrines, as S. Chrysostom. Christ no doubt calls the men themselves, the Scribes and Pharisees, the plant, as in the verse following He calls them blind and leaders of the blind. We are ourselves sometimes good plants, sometimes bad. God makes us good : we make ourselves evil (*Jer.* ii. 21). The meaning is, therefore, that they whom God planted as a good vine—a vine elect—turn into an evil one ; or that they who planted themselves an evil vine in the beginning cannot flourish and bear fruit long, and are, therefore, to be cut down and cast into everlasting fire, as He said above of the evil tree (iii. 10 ; vii. 19). In this sense, Origen (*On Jerem.*, *Hom.* i.) and S. Jerome explain it. Christ desired only to say that these, as wicked and profligate, would be sent away by Him, because they had not the Spirit of God, but followed their own devices and tradition, and, therefore, could not receive the words of Christ, which are full of the Spirit : as He says immediately after (verse 14, and S. *John* vi. 44).

Some modern interpreters explain the passage of predestination and reprobation, which S. Augustin certainly did not do ; for Christ would excuse, rather than condemn them, if He said that they were to be rejected because they were reprobate, and could not do otherwise than they did ; and perhaps not all of them were reprobate : perhaps some of them afterwards believed. And as Christ did not say that they were reprobate, it would be rash in us to say so. He says that they would be rejected, not as being reprobate, but as being blind. But they who are blind may be enlightened. For many were blind and were afterwards enlightened ; and Christ does not use the words "rooted out" absolutely, but only if they be not converted—if they will not become good plants, as He said before (xii. 33) ; and as the householder long expected the tree which he had planted in his vineyard to bring forth good fruit, that is, to be made good (S. Luke xiii. 7).

Verse 14. *If the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch.*

All heretic teachers are blind, and leaders of the blind. Hence not only the masters, but those also who follow them, fall into the ditch, and they cannot be excused from ignorance.

Verse 15. *And Peter answering.*

"Answering" is a Hebraism for beginning to speak, as in chap. xi. 25. "Peter," says S. Chrysostom, "as the most ardent of all, usually anticipates all." S. Mark (vii. 17) does not say that it was Peter, but that it was the disciples who asked that question, when Christ had entered into the house. Euthymius says that S. Peter began, and the rest followed ; but it would rather seem to be a syllepsis, in which what he alone asked all are said to have asked, or that he asked in the name of all, which is very probable, as he did not say expound "to me," but "to us," this

parable ; or because, if he asked for himself alone, Scripture is accustomed to put by figure many for one, when all, like these, are of the same class : as S. Matthew (xxvi. 8) writes that when the ointment was poured out the disciples were angered, when it is clear, from S. *John* xii. 4, that Judas only was so ; and (xxvii 44) the thieves who were crucified with Christ are said to have blasphemed, when S. Luke (xxiii. 39, 40) shows clearly that one only blasphemed, and that he was rebuked by the other, who not only did not do the same, but confessed Christ. It is no objection that Christ, speaking not of one, but of the whole, said immediately, "Are you also yet without understanding?" For, when Judas alone murmured against the woman who had poured out the ointment, Christ, speaking of the whole, said, "Let *ye* her alone" (S. *Matt.* xxvi. 10 ; S. *Mark* xiv. 6).

Verse 17. *Do you not understand.*

S. Jerome says that some profane persons on this accused Christ of ignorance of philosophy, because He said, "Whatever is taken into the mouth passes out," whereas some remains for the nourishment of the body. Christ, then, was ignorant of that which no one is ignorant of. He spoke not philosophically, nor with subtlety, but popularly ; for as but a small portion remains, He spoke as if none did. But we may ask, What is the argument which Christ used ? for it does not appear how the conclusion follows from the premisses. The answer is that Christ laid down this premiss as a thing known *per se*, that nothing can defile but the heart, which is the fountain of the whole man ; or that which is either in the heart or proceeds from it, as in verses 18, 19. Because food, then, does not proceed out of the heart, nor is in it, but proceeds into the belly, and passes out, He rightly concludes that it cannot defile the man.

Verse 18. *But the things which proceed out of the mouth.*

Christ says that out of the mouth proceed not only thoughts, though these do so most properly, but also deeds and whatever results in deeds. For all deeds are first conceived in the heart, where they are not seen unless they come forth through the mouth, the only orifice of the heart ; and it is most natural that what we are going to do should be first conceived in our hearts, then spoken from our mouth, and lastly carried out into action. Thus works proceed through words from the heart. It sometimes happens that we act without speaking ; but Christ regards only what takes place most generally, and therefore He says what follows.

Verse 21. *Into the coasts of Tyre and Sidon.*

These were two Gentile maritime cities (as xi. 21). It is not certain whether Christ came into the actual country of the Gentiles, though almost all authors think so ; or whether He only came to the confines of Galilee and Phœnicia, in which Tyre and Sidon were situated. On the one hand, it does not seem likely that Christ Himself did what He forbade the Apostles to do : “ Go ye not into the way of the Gentiles ” (x. 5), especially as He came to teach the Jews only, the Gentiles being left for after time to the Apostles. On the other hand, S. Mark, “ And rising from thence, He went into the coasts of Tyre and Sidon ” (vii. 24), seems to signify that He did pass on into the country of the Gentiles itself. But it cannot be conclusively decided from that passage. For in the same chapter of S. Mark (verse 31) the words, “ He came by Sidon to the sea of Galilee,” are a corruption, as many have observed ; so that it would rather appear that He did not come into the country of the Gentiles. We may ask why He came hither ? S. Mark (vii. 24) seems to imply that it was for concealment. From this it is clear that He wished to be

concealed when He had come thither ; but whether He came there for that purpose is not certain. S. Chrysostom (*Hom. liii.*) thinks that He came thither because He had just previously appeared to abrogate the ceremonies of the Law and the observances of meats, and desired to show, by coming to the Gentiles, that there was no longer Jew and Greek ; as Peter, when he saw the sheet filled with all kinds of animals, and had learnt that there was no longer to be any difference of meats, was commanded to go to Cornelius, a Gentile (*Acts x. 19, 20*). Others think that He went thither because the Jews would not receive His doctrines, as S. Paul and Barnabas said (*Acts xiii. 46*). So say S. Jerome, Bede, Theophylact, except that Theophylact does not think that He came to teach but to be concealed. S. Epiphanius thinks that it was to rest.

Verse 22. *And behold a woman of Chanaan.*

S. Mark (vii. 26) calls her a woman of Syro-Phœnicia, which in no way opposes S. Matthew. For the men of Tyre and Sidon were Syro-Phœnicians, as Pliny and Strabo say. They were called by a compound name, because the Syrians had seized Phœnicia, as some think, like the Gallo-græci or Celtiberi ; or, as seems more probable, because there were some Phœnicians who were not inhabitants of Syria but of Africa, and who were called Libyo-Phœnicians, that is, Phœnicians inhabitants of Lybia, as these were called Syro-Phœnicians ; and the woman is said to have come out of the coasts. Yet there is no probability in favour of the common opinion that she was called a woman of Chanaan, either because the Phœnicians were driven out of the land of Chanaan by the Jews, or, as some would have it, because they were the descendants of Cham, the son of Noe, whose firstborn son was called Sidon (*Gen. x. 15*), and whom they represented to be the founder of Sidon, although profane writers mention another as such. S.

Chrysostom has observed that the Evangelist recorded her to be a Chanaanite, to show that her faith was more wonderful; for the Chanaanites were held by the Jews the most wicked of all the Gentiles. S. Mark has said that she was a Greek, that is, a Gentile, as our version renders it. For all Gentiles in the Sacred Writings, and more especially in the New Testament, are called Greeks and opposed to Jews, though neither in language nor by descent actually Greeks (*Acts* ix. 29; xviii. 4; *Rom.* i. 16; ii. 9; iii. 9; *1 Cor.* i. 22, 24; *Gal.* iii. 28).

*Have mercy on me.*

She says "on me" that she might move Christ more than if she should say "my daughter"; or, as S. Chrysostom, Theophylact, and Euthymius say, because her daughter was lying without sense, and she felt the sufferings of both, her own and her daughter's.

*Thou Son of David.*

1. Why Christ was so addressed most chiefly by those who wanted some favour from Him has been explained chap. i.  
 2. We must believe that this woman, though not a Jewess, had heard something, either from her vicinity to the Jews, or from the prophets who spoke of Christ as the future Son of David. She at least knew that He was so styled commonly by the Jews who believed on Him.

Verse 23. *Who answered her not a word.*

Lest, say S. Jerome and Bede, He should seem to contradict Himself, because (x. 5) He had said to His disciples, Go ye not into the way of the Gentiles. So He answered in the following verse: "I was not sent but to the sheep that are lost of the house of Israel".

Christ seems to have been silent for two reasons. To prove the woman's faith and constancy; or, rather as S.

Chrysostom says, to show it to the others ; for it was great and rare faith to persevere when apparently held in contempt, and not thought worthy of reply ; and that Christ might show that it was not of His own will to grant to the Gentiles the grace of miracles, when He was not sent but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel ; but that He did so as it were reluctantly, and as if compelled by the woman's prayers.

*Send her away.*

By granting what she asked for. Euthymius says that they asked for her ; and it is very likely that the woman entreated them to plead for her as for themselves.

*For she crieth after us.*

This seems to mean : "Grant her what she asks, if only because of her importunity, as Thou taughtest us in the parable of the man who sought the loaves at an inconvenient hour of the night" (*S. Luke* xi. 8). The saying of S. Jerome, that the Apostles entreated for her to be rid of her clamour, seems somewhat harsh. S. Mark (vii. 25) says that she entered the house where Christ was and fell at His feet ; which seems opposed to this account, wherein it is signified that she followed Him as He went along the way, and cried behind Him. S. Augustin (*De Cons.*, ii. 49) answers that she first went into the house where Christ was, and fell at His feet, and said, "Have mercy upon me," as S. Mark says ; but that Christ made her no answer, but went out of the house, and she followed and cried after Him, as S. Matthew relates.

This is easily gathered from S. Mark, who says that Christ, as soon as He came into the country, entered into a house, and wished to be concealed, but could not be, for the Syro-Phœnician immediately came and fell at His feet. Therefore the idea of some, that she first followed Christ in



the way, and after cried out behind Him, and the disciples said, "Send her away"; and that He went into a house that He might grant her request in a private place, and that she fell at His feet, seems in no degree probable.

Verse 24. *I am not sent but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.*

It is the most ungrateful and wicked error of the followers of Calvin, that Christ came or died, not for the sake of all men, but only for the predestinated. They cannot make the heresy good from this passage ; for He says that He came not for these, but that He was sent to the Jews alone. Christ says then that He was sent to the Jews alone. All of these were not predestinated, but the greater part were reprobate. He was not sent, therefore, for the predestinate alone. He says that He was not sent but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, either because He came to them first, as S. Paul says (*Acts* xiii. 46 ; S. Ambrose, *On Ps.* xliii., and Gaudentius, *Tract.* vii. *on Exodus* ; S. Cyril Alexandria, *On Isaiah*, bk. v. ; and S. Jerome and Bede, in *Comments.*), or that He was come to show His presence, preaching, and miracles to the Jews alone ; for He would not preach the Gospel or perform miracles to the Gentiles, *ipse per se*, but by His Apostles ; and therefore He is termed by S. Paul the Minister of the Circumcision (*Rom.* xv. 8). As S. Hilary and S. Augustin (*Tract.* xxxi., xlvii., *in John*) suppose. He calls the Jews "sheep" (x. 6) ; the Gentiles "dogs" (26).

It is easy to understand why He would not show His presence to other nations than the Jews, because, as S. Augustin says in his *Tract.* xxxi. *on S. John*, the promise of the coming Messiah was made to the Jews alone, on account of the faith of Abraham, as said on chap. i. 1. He did not come, therefore, to Tyre and Sidon to preach or work miracles, but rather that He might be concealed,

if He came thither, as discussed on verse 21 ; nor did He perform this miracle by design and in a predetermined place, but as if compelled, as it were, by the prayers and importunities of the woman, as explained on verse 22. And He did not give it as bread, to the dogs, but cast it to them ; or (not this even, but) He broke it off for her like a crumb from the table. (See on verse 27.)

Verse 26. *It is not good.*

Good, καλόν, honourable, becoming, appropriate.

*The bread of the children.*

The bread is the grace of miracles and of the Gospel generally, which was in a sense confined to the Jews alone, as by the covenant with Abraham, of whom He calls the Jews the children, as (*Exodus* iv. 22) Israel my first-born.

*And to cast it.*

βαλλέιν, *projicere*. The word shows that it was not the fine bread of the children to be disposed of so rudely ; as if it were not distributed with care and design, but thrown about at random. The dogs have a coarser bread than the children. Natural objects—the sun, moon, rain, and other things of the same kind—are the bread of the dogs, that is, of the Gentiles, which are dispensed by the providence of God, indeed, but by a providence general, less exact, and given forth to all in common, as acorns are cast to swine. The grace of the Gospel, which is above nature, is the bread of the children, not to be cast forth at random, but distributed with greater care and design.

*To the dogs.*

Christ opposes the dogs to the children because, although the householder has the care of both, he has a prior and much greater care of the children. The Jews were pro-

bably used to call all other nations dogs, as the Greeks called them barbarians. It is certain that it was their custom to call the vilest and most worthless of men by this name by way of contempt, as we read in 2 *Kings* iii. 8 ; xvi. 9 ; 4 *Kings* viii. 13. S. Mark (vii. 27) says that Christ said : " Suffer first the children to be filled " ; by which words He seemed to give her some hope that the time would come when her request should be granted ; for He knew that the children never would be filled, but would reject with contempt the bread offered them from heaven. But it is a mystery ; and He explained, not what happened from the fault of the Jews, but what, both from the divine counsels and from the covenant with Abraham, ought to have been done.

*Yea, Lord.*

All authors nearly have observed that the word " Yea " is not that of one contradicting, but of assenting. It is not clear how the woman argued, or what force the causal term carries. In the expression, " For the whelps also ". For if she granted the truth of Christ's words, she could not conclude that the whelps eat of the crumbs, though they actually do so ; and, if she wished to say this, she should rather have said " but " than " for "—" but the whelps " ; that is, although it is not good to take children's bread and give it to them, yet the masters suffer them to eat of the crumbs which fall from the tables.

It may be explained as follows. Christ had termed the woman a dog, and she took up the word and, as S. Chrysostom has observed, made an argument from it, and cleverly proved her case. " Yea, Lord ; " that is, " I am indeed a dog, for the dogs eat of the crumbs ; and thus, if I am a dog, I ought at least to eat of the crumbs ". Therefore, this *vaî, etiam*, " Yea, " means the same as what we commonly say in an argument when our opponent says a thing which he thinks greatly against us, but which we take as

strongly on our side. "This is what I would have of you, that I am a dog ; for even the dogs eat of the crumbs."

*Of the crumbs.*

Christ calls the lesser and the less frequent miracles crumbs ; and Theophylact has observed that it is as if the woman had said : I do not ask of Thee to work miracles everywhere here, as among the Jews ; to cure the blind, or raise the dead ; but one thing only, and that less difficult in its nature, to cast out the devil from my daughter.

*Which fall.*

This word answers to that used by Christ, "cast," and is opposed to it. As if she had said : I do not ask Thee to work a miracle openly (*ex professo*), as among the Jews, but by the way, as it were ; not as if Thou gavest it, or threwest it down, but as if it fell from Thee, as crumbs do from the tables of the rich.

*From the table.*

Christ calls that abundance, so to speak, of all graces which was in Him the table, as the table of the rich is loaded with every kind of food (*Col.* ii. 9 ; *S. John* i. 16).

*Of their masters.*

She, says S. Chrysostom, calls the Jews their masters, whom Christ had called sons. He ascribes this to her great humility. It may rather be that she called Christ Himself Master, but that she used the plural, because of the number of dogs, each of which had its own master.

Verse 28. *O woman, great is thy faith.*

The words of admiration. It is to be observed that Christ never praised the faith of any but Gentiles, as this woman and the centurion (viii. 10). For the faith of the Gentiles was greater than that of the Jews. How Christ could feel admiration has been explained on that verse.

*Verse 32. Called together His disciples.*

To communicate His designs to them, as S. Jerome says. It may appear that Christ wished to try their faith, and to take the occasion of the future miracle, that it might appear by their confession that it was not bread with which so great a multitude could be fed. For we find that Christ, without a great and evident need, never performed miracles. Wherefore He waited three days before He performed the following miracle, that if they had brought any food with them from another source it might be consumed, as S. Chrysostom and Euthymius have observed. S. Chrysostom and Theophylact afterwards add that the disciples did not then suggest to Christ to send the multitudes away into the villages to buy bread, as they had done (xiv. 15) ; because they had now made some advance in faith, and because they saw that all the people were eager, and, in their desire to hear, forgot their hunger.

*Because they continue with Me now three days.*

Some think that for the whole three days all or the greater number of the people fasted. This that great *jejeunii magister*, Calvin, ascribed not to their virtue, but to the more subtle atmosphere, for that we in our denser climate could not endure so long an abstinence, as if the more subtle atmosphere did not make men more sharp of appetite. He would not, we think, have the French fast for this reason. We read, not only among the Easterns, but also among the Europeans, of much longer fasts. But it cannot be concluded from this passage that either all or some fasted for three days. We can only know that they were fasting when Christ spoke ; because He said : " I will not send them away fasting ". For they had consumed, as Euthymius says, what they brought with them.

What happened in the 30th verse has been explained above (xiv. 15-21).

Verse 39. *The coasts.*

Some Greek copies read τὰ ὄρη, "the mountains," for τὰ ὅρια, "the coasts," which does not seem an improvement.

*Magedan.*

S. Mark (viii. 10) says that He came into the parts of Dalmanutha. This is probably a corrupt reading for "Mageda," as here; as S. Jerome (*In lib. de loc. Heb.*), S. Augustin (*De Consens.*, ii. 51), and Bede (*On S. Mark viii.*) testify, and as many copies in their time had it. It is some proof that Dalmanutha is not mentioned anywhere else in Scripture, or, as far as I know, in any profane author. Magedan, however, or, as it is in the Greek, Magdala, is found in 1 *Kings* xvii. 20, though it is uncertain whether it is the same place. But even if we said Dalmanutha, there is no contradiction. For either, as S. Augustin and Bede say, the same place is meant under another name, or, as others conjecture, one is the name of the country, and the other of the city, or each was the name of the city. But each city was near, so that whoever came into the neighbourhood of one came into that of the other; as above (verse 21) Christ is said to have come into the coasts of Tyre and Sidon.

## CHAPTER XVI.

CHRIST REFUSES TO SHOW THE PHARISEES A SIGN FROM  
HEAVEN—PETER'S CONFESSION IS REWARDED—HE  
IS REBUKED FOR OPPOSING CHRIST'S PASSION—ALL  
HIS FOLLOWERS MUST DENY THEMSELVES.

THE first three verses, or even four, as S. Jerome says, are not found in very many copies. But all the Greek and Latin authors have them, and they are found in *S. Mark* (viii. 11); nor is it probable that they were added, in either case. It may appear strange that the Evangelist has related the same thing (xii. 38). But there is no reason why the Scribes and Pharisees—not the same persons, but others in other places—may not have put the same questions. Besides, the Scribes and Pharisees are mentioned as the questioners in the former place, and the Sadducees here. In the former place they did not come to Christ for the purpose of questioning Him, but in the course of a conversation they answered: "We would see a sign of Thee". Here they are said to have come as if for the purpose of questioning Him, and seeking a sign from Him.

### Verse 1. *The Pharisees and Sadducees.*

(*Vide* chap. iii. 7 on Pharisees and Sadducees.) We may observe how the two most opposite sects of Jewish heretics agree among themselves to oppose Christ. For the Pharisees and Sadducees carried on an internecine war among themselves, as we learn not only from Josephus, but also from *S. Luke* (*Acts* xxiii. 6). So Pilate and Herod, when they had previously been enemies, became friends and



united to persecute Christ (*S. Luke* xxiii. 12). So now the followers of Luther and Calvin very widely differ among themselves, but conspire against the Catholic Church ; that is, the Body of Christ. Christ, as Tertullian says, is always crucified between two thieves.

*A sign.*

(See chap. xii. 38.)

Verse 2. *When it is evening.*

Because they sought a sign from Him, Christ showed them from the heavenly appearances that they ought not to seek it thence. Long experience universally shows that the red of evening is a sign of calm and fine weather, and that that of the morning foreshows tempests.

*The face of the sky.*

The Greek has "you hypocrites," and so *S. Luke* xii. 56. He calls them hypocrites, says Euthymius, because they wished to seem wise, when in truth they were most senseless.

The whole difficulty in the passage is as to the manner in which Christ concludes His conversation. Some read it affirmatively—as S. Chrysostom and Theophylact—and explain it thus : " You can discern the face of the heavens indeed ; but the signs of the times, My arrival, you cannot understand. For My first advent ought to be discerned, not from the signs of the heavens, the sun and moon, but from the prophecies and the miracles that I do " (*S. Luke* xvii. 20, 21).

Others take it as an interrogation ; as S. Hilary, S. Jerome, Bede, and Euthymius. " If you know the signs of the heavens, of fair weather and storms, which are more difficult and uncertain, how can you err as to the signs of the times of My coming, which are countersigned by so

many prophecies and proved by so many miracles on My part?" S. Luke (xii. 56): "Ye hypocrites, you know how to discern the face of the heaven and of the earth; but how is it that you do not discern this time?" confirms this opinion. For, although He spoke there to the multitude, and here to the Scribes and Pharisees, it is probable that He used the same style of argument with both: *a majore ad minus*, as some term it; or, *a minore ad majus*, as others; but either is probable.

Verse 5. *And when His disciples were come.*

When they loosed sail to come; for it was when they were setting forth that they forgot the bread. S. Jerome asks how it was possible for them to have forgotten this, when a little before (xv. 37) they collected the seven baskets full of fragments. He answers, that they brought the loaves with them, but when they were setting forth they forgot to take them. It seems, perhaps, more likely that, either of their own accord, or at the command of Christ, the disciples distributed these fragments to the poor. And thus they forgot to take, that is, to buy, bread. It cannot be granted to S. Jerome that what followed happened on the voyage, because S. Luke plainly says, that when there were so great multitudes standing about Him, that they trod one upon another, Christ began to say to the disciples, "Beware ye of the leaven of the Pharisees".

*Over the water.*

Into Bethsaida—as S. Mark viii. 22.

Verse 6. *Who said to them.*

In the Greek, "Jesus said to them". Our version says "Who," expressing the antecedent by the relative, as is very often done in Scripture, especially in the Old Testament.

*Take heed ("intuemini").*

To see (*videre*) is one thing. To take heed (*intueri*) is another; as in the Greek βλέπω differs from ὁράω. For one often sees "who takes no heed": in this sense the Latins use *video*, and not *intueor*, which is "observe mentally". Our version uses a catachresis (pleonasm): "Take heed and beware"—*Intuemini et cavete*; as also does the Greek: ὁρᾶτε καὶ προσεχετε; and S. Mark (viii. 15) ὁρᾶτε βλέπετε.

*Of the leaven.*

S. Hilary and S. Jerome think that the observation of the Law is called leaven. This does not agree with what Christ said afterwards (xxiii. 2). For He commands the Law of Moses to be observed. Rather, that teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees in which they were heretics, and corrupted the Law, is alluded to, and which Christ reprehends (xv. 3, 5, 6). For it is clear from verse 12 that we must understand Him of doctrine; though the words of S. Luke (xii. 1), "Beware ye of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy," may appear contrary. It may be answered, as Bede seems to say, that He called the doctrine itself of the Pharisees and Sadducees, hypocrisy; because they taught one thing and practised another, or because all their teaching tended to hypocrisy. It is a more grave question how Christ here commands the Apostles to beware of their doctrine, when (xxiii. 2) He teaches them to do whatever they say. The answer, again, may be, that He is there speaking of the Scribes and Pharisees as sitting in Moses' seat, that is, explaining the Law of Moses; as long as they do which, they are to be followed; but He does not speak here of the Law of Moses, but of their own leaven, that is, of their heretical teaching, of which He bids them beware.

*Of the Pharisees and Sadducees.*

S. Mark (viii. 15) adds, "and of Herod," or, as it is in other copies, "of the Herodians". Hence, it is clear that there was some sect of Herodians or of Herod. For Christ was speaking of sects when He mentioned the Sadducees, who were certainly heretics, or even more than heretics; and from verse 12 it would appear that the subject was of false and corrupt doctrine. But which Herod was the author of this sect is uncertain: whether Herod Antipater the Great who reigned last, or Herod Antipas, his son, the tetrarch of Galilee; and what doctrine he introduced, there is nothing, seemingly, to show either in sacred or profane history; unless we may conjecture from what Josephus wrote of Herod the king, who gave his mind entirely to Roman fashions, that he was the author of that sect; and from the place given to him by the Evangelist, who places Herod in the last rank of all (*S. Mark* viii. 15), that it consisted merely of pretence, by which, for the sake of power, it adapted itself to every sect, like those whom we now call politicians: men either of no religion at all, or who pretend to be of everyone. The subject will be treated at more length (xxii. 16).

*Verse 7. But they thought within themselves.*

They thought not only how the words of Christ were to be understood, but also what they were to do, as they had taken no bread. This was the cause of their solicitude. Christ blamed them because they did not remember the two great miracles by which, just before, He had fed so many thousands with so little bread.

*Verse 8. But Jesus knowing it.*

Their thoughts, which, as S. Chrysostom says, showed their forgetfulness of the miracle.

Verse 10. *Nor the seven loaves among four thousand men.*

The Greek has, "Of the four thousand". Our version keeps the meaning, but not the words.

Verse 13. *Into the quarters of Cæsarea Philippi.*

All know that there were two Cæsareas. One, the ancient, which was formerly called the Tower of Strato. It was enlarged by King Herod, and adorned by him with many noble works, and called Cæsarea in honour of Augustus Cæsar, as we learn from Josephus (*Antiq.*, xv. 13, and *De Bell. Jud.*, xvi.) and from S. Jerome on this passage. It was situated on the coast of the Mediterranean, between Dora and Joppa. There was another, more modern, in Phœnicia, at the foot of Mount Libanus, where the Jordan takes its rise, which had been previously called Paneas, and which Philip, the son of Herod the Great, and tetrarch of the region of Trachonitis (*S. Luke* iii. 1, 2), adorned and enlarged, and called Cæsarea in honour of Tiberius. Afterwards, King Agrippa, to flatter Nero, called it Neronias, as Josephus says (*Antiq.*, xx. 8). The assertion of S. Jerome that it was then called Paneas does not seem to have been said by a lapse of memory; but it was very likely that in his time the adulatory name of Cæsarea had been lost, and the city had resumed its ancient name of Paneas. It was called Cæsarea Philippi; Philip the tetrarch having so named it to distinguish it from the other Cæsarea of Herod.

*And He asked His disciples.*

S. Mark (viii. 27) says that this happened on the way, and S. Luke (ix. 18) when He was alone praying. Euthymius answers that He took His journey and prayed at the same time. This hardly seems probable. The opinion of S. Augustin (*De Consens.*, ii. 53) seems more probable, that it happened by the way, before He reached

the place to which He was going. He turned aside out of the way to some solitary spot to pray, and, when He had finished His prayer, He went on, and then asked the disciples whom men said that He was. "As He was praying" (*S. Luke ix. 18*) is a Hebraism for "When He had finished," as *Ps. cxxv. 1*: "When the Lord brought back"; that is, "When," or "after He had".

*Whom do men say.*

Many Latin copies, and most Greek ones, have "Whom do men say that I, the Son of man, am?" There is a three-fold version. 1. "Whom do men say that the Son of man is?" 2. "Whom do men say that I, the Son of man, am?" 3. "Whom do men say that I am?" In the first, almost all the Latin copies and all authors agree. In the second, only S. Epiphanius (*In Anchoratus*), Theophylact, and, as it seems, S. Hilary. In the third, only S. Chrysostom (*Hom. lv.*).

The first, which is the most usual one, and that in common use, seems much the best, and the conjecture that it was written at first ("Whom do men say that the Son of man is?") seems very excellent. Then perhaps some Greek, to show that Christ spoke of Himself, inserted *μέ*, "that I am," into the margin; another may have transferred it to the text; and thus it may have begun to be read, "Whom do men say that I, the Son of man, am?" And, lastly, that some transcriber, thinking that there was a redundancy, removed the words, "the Son of man," which were obscure, and left the "Me," "that I," which was clearer. I know that many read it either way, and either without an interrogation, and by apposition: "I, the Son of man"; or, with an interrogation: "Whom do men say that I am? the Son of man?" Both readings seem absurd; the second the more so of the two. For Christ does not call Himself the Son of man honourably, but in

humility; nor does He speak in the third person of any but Himself.

Observe the antithesis. Christ asks: "Whom do men say that the Son of man is?" Peter answers: "Thou art the Son of the living God". Hence it seems that in the first passage we ought to read the words, "the Son of man," for the antithesis. For Christ seems designedly, and in the most contemptuous terms, to have called Himself the Son of man, to try their faith, and to give them an opportunity of saying freely what their thoughts of Him were, even if they held Him no more than a mere man.

*Men.*

A Hebraism, as in chap. v. 13, which S. Luke explains. To S. Matthew's, "Whom do men say?" S. Luke (ix. 18), adds, "Whom do the people say that I am?" as in explanation. S. Matthew, as we have shown, keeps the words; S. Luke the meaning and explanation.

Verse 14. *Some, John the Baptist.*

Why some said John the Baptist, some Elias, some Jeremias, *vide* chap. xi. 4; xiv. 2.

Verse 15. *But whom do you say that I am?*

Here is a plain antithesis. S. Jerome thinks that Christ opposed the Apostles to men, as being something more than men. "Observe," he says, "that from what follows and from the text of the discourse, the Apostles are not called men, but gods. For when Christ had said: Whom do men say that the Son of man is? He added: But whom do you say that I am?" It may be believed that Christ did not oppose them to men as gods, but He seems to have opposed them to the vulgar, as not ordinary men, which S. Chrysostom also thinks. "You who have been with Me always, who have seen Me do many wonderful

things, who in My name have yourselves done many acts of power,—whom do you say that I am ? ”

Verse 16. *Simon Peter answered.*

The Ancients give many reasons for Peter's having answered before the rest. 1. That Peter was the *princeps* of all, as S. Chrysostom (*Hom.* lv.) says. 2. Because he was of a more ardent temperament, as S. Hilary and S. Jerome on chap. xiv. 28 say. 3. Because He was as the mouth of the Apostles, and was accustomed to speak for all, as S. Chrysostom (*in loco*) and S. Augustin say ; for in *S. John* vi. 68, when Christ asked all the disciples if they also would go away, Peter answered : “ Lord, to whom shall we go ? Thou hast the words of eternal life.” Whether he answered here for himself only, or for all, we will endeavour to show on verse 18.

*Thou art the Son of the living God.*

Peter calls Christ the Son, by nature, not by adoption. For all confessed Him to be the Son of God by adoption, as being a just man and a prophet. The most certain proof that Peter thought Christ the Son of the living God was his opposing Him to John, Elias, Jeremiah, and the Prophets, who, it is certain, were the sons of God by adoption. He calls Christ, therefore, the Son of God, not by adoption, but by nature. The Ancients rightly proved the Divinity of Christ from this passage ; as S. Hilary (in his *Comment.*, and *De Trin.*, vi.), S. Athanasius (*Serm. cont. Arian.*, *Serm.* iii.), and Dionysius Alexandria (*Cont. Arian.*).

*The living.*

Peter calls Him the living God to distinguish Him from idols, which are lifeless things, as S. Jerome, Bede, and Euthymius have observed. S. Basil (*De Pœnit.*) terms Him the Son of the Holy God. Rightly, then, Theophy-



lact notes the addition of the Greek article to the word Son, to show, not that He was an ordinary man, but that He was the one only Son of God by nature. (*Vide* chap. x. 2.)

Verse 17. *Simon Barjona.*

So called by contraction for Bar-johanna, which in the Chaldee means the son of John, as he is called (*S. John* xxi. 15). S. Luke uses a like contraction (iii. 30).

*Because flesh and blood.*

Man, that is, consisting of flesh and blood. The Evangelist opposes men to God. "My Father," He says, "who is in heaven," and as *Gal.* i. 16; *S. John* i. 13. Thus Scripture opposes men who savour of carnal things to God, or to those who savour of divine things (*1 Cor.* xv. 50). So it is called the wisdom of the flesh (*Rom.* viii. 6, 7).

Verse 18. *And I.*

A forcible antithesis; but the Greek is still more forcible: καγὼ δέ, "and I assuredly". As if Christ had said: You, who are a man, have called me the Son of the living God; but I, who am the Son of the living God, say that thou art Peter, that is, My vicar, whom thou hast confessed to be the Son of God. For My Church which is built upon Me I will build, as upon a second foundation, upon thee also.

*Thou art Peter.*

Some think that he was not called Peter before, but that the name was only promised him. *S. John* i. 42: "Jesus, looking upon him, said: Thou art Simon the son of Jonas. Thou shalt be called Cephas, which is interpreted Peter."

It is more probable, as S. Augustin says (*De Cons.*, ii.), that he was so called from the beginning of his vocation, as S. Mark (iii. 16) and S. Luke (vi. 14) show. And, therefore,

when Christ said to him (*S. John* i. 42), "Thou art Simon the son of Jona; thou shalt be called Cephas, which is interpreted Peter," He gave him a name; as if He had said: Henceforth thou shalt not be called Simon, but Cephas, *i.e.*, Peter; as God gave Abram the name of Abraham, speaking of the future (*Gen.* xvii. 5).

*And upon this rock I will build My Church.*

Some ancient authors take this rock to mean this faith, or this confession of faith, by which Peter had called Him the son of the living God. Such are S. Hilary (*De Trin.*, vi.) ; S. Gregory of Nyssa (*Cont. Jud.*) ; S. Chrysostom (*Hom.* lv. *in loc.*, and *Orat.* ii. *adv. Jud.*) ; S. Cyril Alexandria (*Dial.* iv. *de Trin.*) ; and the author of the Commentaries on the Epistles of S. Paul, which are ascribed to S. Ambrose (*On Gal.* iv.).

But the interpretation of S. Augustin (*On S. John* xxvii. and cxxiv. 4, and *Serm.* xiii. *de verb. Dom. sec. S. Matt.*) : "Upon this rock, that is, upon Myself," because Christ was the Rock (*1 Cor.* x. 4, and iii. 11), is still further from the meaning. Origen takes it of all who have the same faith (*Tract. in S. Matt.*).

Nothing could be more alien to the meaning of Christ than to suppose Him to say that He built the Church upon Himself, or upon any other foundation than S. Peter. For (1) the demonstrative pronoun "this" is here evidently put for the relative "which". As if Christ had said: "Thou art a rock upon which I will build My Church," for *Petrus* and *Petra* are the same word, only of different genders. It may be doubted why, if not S. Matthew himself, yet the Greek translator of S. Matthew, made that distinction of word and gender. The answer is, that in the Greek *πέτρος* and *πέτρα* are masculine and feminine. Peter, because he was a man, could not be spoken of by the word *Petra*, but must be described by his own proper masculine name

*Petrus.* (2) When Christ spoke of the foundation of the building, He called him not *Petrus* but *Petra*, though both words meant the same thing. And in buildings of this kind, the feminine form of the word is more used than the masculine—the masculine being Attic and rare. Besides, who doubts that by these words Christ meant to bestow some great and singular gift upon Peter as a reward of his confession of faith, or wished to promise such? But what would Christ have given to him if He had only given him the name of Peter? Nay, He would not have given him the name, for, as has been shown, he was already called Peter; but by the words, “upon this rock,” He signified that He would bestow upon him the great and singular dignity of founding upon him His Church; that is, of making him the head of the Church, and His own vicar in it. From the words that follow: “And I will give to thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven,” it is clear that the words in question apply to Peter, for it is absurd that a change either of things or persons could be made by so few words. As, then, Christ said, “I will give unto thee the keys,” so He said, “Upon this rock,” that is, upon thee, “I will build My Church”.

He gave him the same thing in different words, and by different metaphors, that he should be His vicar in the Church. This dignity (prior to that of the foundation), when He said, “Upon this rock I will build My Church,” He afterwards confirmed by the metaphor of chief or head of the Church, when He gave him the keys like those of a city: Christ Himself being both head and foundation of the Church; by which two names and metaphors, not two, but one and the same thing is signified.

It may be asked why Christ did not directly, and in one word, say: “Upon thee will I build My Church”? The obvious reply is, that the grace and force of His words would in that case have been lost. These consisted in

Christ's using terms applicable to a building when speaking of the Church as a building ; but it would not have been consistent to say, "Upon thee," for buildings are not founded upon men, but upon rocks, as S. Jerome says. Besides, if the meaning were "upon this rock," that is, upon this faith, or upon Myself, it would be very greatly in favour of the opponent who thinks that Peter spoke not for himself alone, but for all the Apostles ; which, it must be confessed, some of the ancient Fathers thought as well (S. Chrysostom, S. Jerome, *in loc.* ; S. Augustin, *Serm. xiii. de verb. Dom. ap. S. Matt.*), who shall shortly be commented on with due respect. We have now to refute the errors of the followers of Calvin. If Peter spoke for all, why did not Christ say to all, "Blessed are ye" ? Why were not the names of all changed ? Why was it not said to all, "To you I give the keys" ? Again, when Christ asked all, why did not all reply ? Especially when a little before, when He asked whom men said that He was, not only Peter, but all, or as many as would, answered : "Some say John the Baptist, others Elias, others Jeremias, or one of the Prophets". All other authors, then, have seen more correctly that Peter answered for himself alone. Not that the others did not believe the same thing, and would have said it, had not Peter anticipated them ; but that Peter, with a great faith, was the first to break out with a confession. These authors meant this alone, when they said that he answered for all, and called him the mouth of the Apostles. It is consonant with this, that as Christ chose the twelve Apostles, after the form of the twelve Patriarchs, so He should choose one like Abraham, who, because of his great faith, was the head of all ; and that as Abraham was the foundation of the Old Testament—so Peter should be of the Church of the Gospel. For all things are equal in both. Abraham excelled in faith, so did Peter. Abram's name was changed to Abraham, as he was to be the father

of many nations (*Gen.* xvii. 5) ; and so Peter's, who was to be the father and head of all Christians. For the one sole reason given by the heretics for denying that the Church was founded upon Peter, that it could have no other foundation but that which is laid, which is Christ Jesus (*1 Cor.* iii. 11), is altogether false. For S. Paul (*Eph.* ii. 20) calls the Apostles and Prophets the foundation of the Church. The heretics' interpretation of this, as meaning the faith and doctrine, is wholly perverse. For the Apostle adds : " Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner-stone ". In these words, he signifies that in the Church, as in the foundations of other buildings, there are many stones, the first and chief corner-stone being Christ, into whom all others are united ; the second ones being the Apostles and Prophets, who are themselves built upon the first, but who were the foundation of other Christians ; as S. John says in the *Apocalypse* (xxi. 14), in plain words, which have not yet met with any heretical explanation.

Why, then, did S. Paul not say that we are built upon Christ rather than upon the Apostles and Prophets ? The answer is easy. We are placed further from Christ in the building of the Church than from the Apostles and Prophets. For Christ is in the first place. He is the first and corner-stone. Upon Christ are the Apostles and Prophets. Upon the Apostles and Prophets are built ourselves.

Lastly, except these heretics, all ancient authors teach that the Church was built upon Peter. So, then, S. Clement Rome (*Ep. to James*), Hippolytus (*De Consum. Mundi*), Dionysius (*Ep. to Tim.*), Tertullian (*De Præscript.* and *De Pudicitia*), S. Cyprian (*Eps. to Jubaian. and Cornel.*), Origen (*Hom. v. on Exod.*), S. Epiphanius (*Anchorat.*), S. Gregory Nazianzen (*Orat. de Moderat.*), S. Basil (*Hom. de Pœnit.*, and ii., *Against Eunom.*), S. Ambrose (*Serm. xlvii. de Fide Petri*, and lxviii. *de Nat. Pet. et Paul.*), and the

Hymn of the Church, which is said by S. Augustin to be the composition of S. Ambrose :

“ Hoc, ipsa petra Ecclesiæ  
Canente, culpam diluit ”—

“ And singing this the Church’s rock itself,  
His fault condoned ”.

So, S. Jerome (*Ep. to Marcella against Montanus*, and bk. i., *Adv. Jovin.*), the author of the Commentaries on the Epistles of S. Paul—which are commonly ascribed to S. Ambrose—(*On Gal. ii.*), Leo (*Serm. ii. de Pet. et Paulo, Ep. to Bp. Vienna* and *Ep. to Geminian*), the whole Council of Chalcedon, Juven-  
cus (*Psellus ap. Theod.*, and iii., *In Cant.*), and lastly, those authors who are thought to have held the contrary. For S. Hilary (*De Trin.*, vi.), when he said that Christ founded the Church upon the faith of Peter, uses these words : “ After his confession of this mystery, the blessed Simon, laying it as the foundation in the edification of the Church, and receiving the keys ”.—And (*On Ps. cxxxi.*) : “ So great was Christ’s zeal of suffering for the salvation of the human race, that He named Peter, with the railing of Satan ” (*Satanæ convicio*), “ the first confessor of God, the foundation of the Church, the door-keeper of the kingdom of heaven, and in earthly judgment the judge of heaven ”.—“ O thou, happy in the naming of thy new name, blessed foundation of the Church, and rock worthy of that edification which shall destroy the laws of hell, the gates of Tartarus, and all the bars of death ” (*Can. xvi. on S. Matt.*). And S. Chrysostom (*Hom. ii. on Ps. i.*) : “ Hear what Christ said to Peter, the column and foundation of the faith, who, for the strength of his confession, was called Peter : ‘ Thou art Peter ; and upon this rock I will build My Church ’ ”. S. Cyril (ii., *On S. John xii.*) : “ ‘ Thou art Simon, the son of Jona ; thou shalt be called Cephas,’ rightly showing, by the name itself, that on him, as on a

rock and most firm stone, He would build His Church". And S. Augustin (*Serm. xlix. in verb. Dom. sec. Joann.*): "He said to Peter, on whom He establishes His Church, 'Peter, lovest thou Me?'" And (lib. i. 21 of *Retract.*) the opinion of those who should say that the Church was built upon Peter he does not disapprove.

From this it appears that those authors who explain the words "upon this rock" by "this faith" received it in a different sense to these heretics. It would seem the best explanation to say that they meant that the Church was built upon the faith and confession of Peter; that is, upon Peter because of his faith and confession, as all other authors say.

We use such expressions daily, as when we say that the kingdom was built upon the faith of one man; that is, on one man because of his faith, as S. Ambrose (*De Resurrect. Fide*) said: "It was not the body of Peter that walked upon the waters, but his faith; for it was not his body, but his faith that made him do it". It is clear from these words that they do not deny, as the heretics do, that S. Peter is the foundation of the Church.

It may be said: If all others, not only Apostles, but also Prophets, as S. Paul says, are the foundation of the Church, what in particular is given to S. Peter in those words? The answer is, that among all the Prophets and Apostles, he, after Christ, was the first foundation of the Church, and fills Christ's place in His absence. But when others are a foundation also, nothing less could be given to him than that he should be the second foundation-stone after Christ, and in the same way in which Christ is such; that is, that not only one part, but the whole Church, should rest on him (*niteretur*). There is this difference, that Christ is the foundation by His own power, Peter by Christ's; and Christ rests on no other foundation, but Peter rests on another, that is, Christ.

*My Church.*

Christ calls the Church His, to show that He was God, and the Lord of the Church, as Theophylact has rightly shown.

*And the gates of hell.*

That by the gates of hell all the powers of the devil is meant is beyond question ; but it is doubtful why, by the word "gates," powers is signified, and why Christ did not call it by its proper name of power, but by a metaphorical one of the gates. The reason may be easily conjectured. Christ speaks of the Church as if it were some city. The gates were the strongly fortified parts of the city (as in *Ps.* cxlvii. 13) ; and because cities were most commonly taken through the gates, as *Gen.* xxii. 17, xxiv. 60 : "Thy seed shall possess the gates of thine enemies" ; that is shall possess the cities of their enemies ; and *Judges* v. 8 ; 3 *Kings* viii. 37.

For this reason, therefore, the power of the devil is not called the power, but the gates of hell. But why is it called hell, and not the devil, who is the enemy of the Church, as Moses said ? (*Gen.* xxii. 17). This also is easy. Because, as Christ speaks of the Church, He speaks of hell, where the devil rules, as if of some city, as *Ps.* cvi. 16 : "Because he hath broken gates of brass, and burst iron bars". For these are two cities : one of God, the other of the devil, of which S. Augustin wrote his books.

*Shall not prevail.*

Shall not overcome, or have the mastery. The meaning of these words does not appear to be that which most authors, except S. Hilary, seem to suppose. For they think that the meaning is, that the power of the devil may try the Church, but will never be able to overcome it, never to





oppress it. This meaning, though true, is poor, and does not fill up the place and words of Christ. Christ seems to have intended something better. For gates do not overcome, but resist ; so that it is not the power of offending, but of defending, that must be meant by the gates. The meaning, then, seems to be that there will be a time when the Church, founded by Christ upon a rock, shall so take by storm all the power of the devil that he will be able by no power and no arts to resist. The Hebrew is לֹא יִכְלֹה that is, will not be able to resist it. It is clear that S. Hilary is of this opinion. The Church, he says, shall break to pieces all the laws and gates of hell, and all the bonds of death. By the gates of hell, that is, the power of the devil, some of the Ancients understand heresies ; as S. Epiphanius (*In Anchorat.*). Others, vices, as S. Ambrose (*De Bon. Mortis.*, chap. xii., and *Comments. on S. Luke*, ix.). Others both, as Origen (*Tract. i. on S. Matt.*), S. Jerome, and Bede. Others, the blasphemies of heretics and their persecution of the Church, as Euthymius. Others, all persecutors of the Church, as Theophylact. It is better not to narrow the meaning, but to understand generally all the power of the devil.

*Against it.*

Origen (*Tract. i. on S. Matt.*) and S. Chrysostom (*Hom. lv.*) think that the relative is to be referred either to the rock or to the Church. Doubtless to the latter, which the ancient authors think more probable, and the rest think true ; although Christ said that the gates of hell should not prevail against the Church, because it was founded upon a rock (as above, vii. 24, 25) ; except that there it is said that that house resisted the rains and waves and winds, and here that the Church shall not only resist hell, but shall take it by storm, because it is founded upon a strong rock. For the Church and hell are spoken of, as we have said, as like

two cities or strong citadels, near to and at war with one another ; of which the one that hath the better foundation, and is the most strongly fortified, shall take the other.

Verse 19. *And I will give to thee the keys.*

The power of opening and shutting the kingdom of heaven is called the keys by metaphor (*S. Luke xi. 52*). The same power is immediately expressed by the other metaphor of binding and loosing.

The question is, in what this power consists? The followers of Luther and Calvin say that it means (merely) the teaching that their sins have already been forgiven, or that they will be if we believe the Gospel. But if so, Christ, in giving Peter the keys, gives him nothing more than that which the Scribes and Pharisees had before (*xxiii. 2*, and *S. Luke xi. 52*): "Woe to you lawyers, for you have taken away the key of knowledge ; you yourselves have not entered in, and those that were entering in you have hindered". It has been proved, however, that Christ not only gave more to Peter than to the Scribes and Pharisees, but more even than to the other Apostles. Something, then, is meant by the power of the keys more than the power of teaching. Besides, Christ gave this power not only to the twelve Apostles, but also to the seventy-two disciples (*S. Luke x. 1*). But the keys and the power of binding and loosing He gave to the Apostles alone. Thus, the power of binding and loosing and the power of teaching are not one and the same power. Besides, Christ had already given the power of teaching to the Apostles (*x. 7*) ; but that of the keys He had not given.

It has been shown that the Apostles had had given to them a general power of teaching ; but the use of it was restricted for a time, that they should not go among the Gentiles, because it was not fitting that the Gospel should be preached to the Gentiles before it had been preached to

the Jews. Supposing a special power only to have been given to them, what would it have to do with the present question? Certainly, if to teach and to remit sins be one and the same thing, wherever they could teach they could also forgive sins. But we see that the power of teaching had been given them, but the power of the remission of sins had not been given. Therefore they are not the same power.

We see, also, that in this place where the keys are given, and with them the power of binding and loosing, no mention is made of teaching. On the other hand (xxviii. 19, and *S. Mark* xvi. 15), where the Apostles are commanded to preach the Gospel to every creature, no mention is made of the keys, or of binding and loosing. For, from the words of *S. John* (xx. 22, 23), we learn that Christ, when He sent the Apostles, said: "Receive ye the Holy Ghost. Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them; and whose sins ye retain, they are retained." Though it was said to be about the same time, it was not said to have been actually the same. Besides, as in many other instances, *S. John* relates this as having been passed over by the other Evangelists.

It is not the least argument that the power of remitting sins was given to the Apostles with a different ceremony to that of teaching. For, when He gave the former, He is said to have breathed upon the Apostles, and said, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost". But when He gave the latter, He is not said to have either breathed upon them nor given them the Holy Spirit. The power of teaching, then, was different to that of remitting sins. Add to this, that if men only remit sins in this manner by teaching, whoever teaches another, even if the teacher be a woman, will remit sins, which is both unheard of and most senseless.

Again, if to teach is to loosen, that is, to remit sins, not to teach is to bind, that is, to retain them. So that every-

one who does not teach has the power of binding, that is, of retaining sins. Again, if to teach is to loosen, and not to teach is to bind, Christ had not given the Apostles power to bind when He commanded them to teach all nations; that is (if their opinion be true), to loosen all, and to bind none. To what end was this power of binding, if no one were to be bound? It follows, from their own opinion, that the saying of Christ was false. For if to teach is to loosen, it is not the case that whatever the Apostles loosed upon earth would be loosed in heaven; for how many have been taught well whose sins, for their unbelief, have not been loosed in heaven! Nay, how many who have believed and been well taught, and have believed rightly, will be lost!

Finally, those whom we read of as having been bound in Scripture, were not bound either by teaching or not teaching. S. Paul bound the Corinthian (1 *Cor.* v. 5). He bound those heretics (1 *Tim.* i. 20), not by teaching, but by delivering them to Satan, when he had taught them well before; as now the Catholic Church binds the heretics with whom we are now at issue by excommunicating them, that is, by delivering them over to Satan.

So far one of these heretics on this passage has been answered. The second is their denial that anything was given to S. Peter by these words, which was not given equally to all the other Apostles.

This has to be answered, not by disputing the words, "Upon this rock," of which enough has been said, and proof shown that it was given to Peter alone, that the Church should be built upon him. We are now to treat of the words: "I will give to thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven".

By these words, I maintain, against the opinion of the followers of Calvin, and even of some Catholics, that the primacy of the Church was given to Peter; not that these

Catholics deny it, but because they think it not to have been given him but in the preceding words, "Upon this rock I will build My Church"; and that the keys were not given to S. Peter alone, but to all the Apostles collectively. It appears that in both forms of words the primacy of the Catholic Church was given to Peter.

The words mean this. For the keys of a house or city are given into the keeping of the chief of the house or city. Therefore, the primacy is signified in Scripture by the keys, as in *Isaiah* xxii. 22: "I will lay the key of the house of David upon his shoulder"; that is, I will give to him the supreme power in the kingdom of heaven. The words, "Upon his shoulder," when keys are not laid upon the shoulder but carried in the girdle, are used, as is frequently the case in Scripture, by a confusion of two metaphors, signifying one and the same thing; one of the keys, the other of the sceptre; each of which terms expresses the supreme power; and because the sceptre is laid upon the shoulder, He says that He would place the keys of the house of David on his shoulder, as in *Isaiah* ix. 6: "And the government is upon his shoulder". In the same sense Christ says (*Apoc.* i. 18) that He has the keys of death and hell; that is, that He is the Lord of life and death; and (iii. 7) that He has the keys of David: "He that hath the key of David; He that openeth and no man shutteth, shutteth and no man openeth". In this sense, then, the keys were given to Peter; that is, the supreme power in the Church, that he might shut and no man open, and that he might open and no man shut; that is, that no man should loose what he has bound, and no man bind what he has loosed. Hence, the power of the Roman Pontiff is most effectually proved *ad reservatos casus*; and hence it is concluded that to Peter alone it was said in this place: "I will give to thee the keys of heaven and hell"; and so said as if they were not to be given to any other, because

he alone answered : “ Thou art Christ the Son of the living God ” ; as it was said to him alone : “ On this rock I will build My Church ”. For by both metaphors, one of the foundation, and the other of the keys, one and the same primacy is signified, and the explanation of one is that of the other.

2. It cannot be denied that the other Apostles had also their own keys ; that is, the power of binding and loosing ; as all ancient authors teach, saying that the keys were given to all ; but I deny that they had the keys which are now in question, and that those which all Catholics call keys, and rightly so, but in a different sense, are ever called keys in Scripture. It is a most unanswerable proof of the truth of this, that when Christ gave the other Apostles (xviii. 18 ; *S. John* xx. 23) the power of binding and loosing, He made no mention of the keys. Peter alone, therefore, had those keys by which he so opened that no one could shut, and so shut that no one could open. So, in a house, all or many have their own keys, but the master alone has all the keys, and the secret ones, by which, when he wills, he can so shut that no one can open, and so open that no one can shut.

3. The third error of the followers of Calvin is that the power which was given to S. Peter was not given also to his successors ; and therefore, even if it be granted that Peter had the primacy of the Church, it does not follow that his successors had the same, but that this power was given (to use his own words) to Peter personally. Tertullian (*De Pudicitia*) seems to say the same, but he spoke not as a Catholic, but as a heretic, when he deserted the camp of the Church to join that of Montanus. S. Jerome (*Lit. de Script. Eccl.*) says that that work of Tertullian was written against the Church.

We have shown that the keys and the rock upon which Christ built the Church mean the same thing. Who is so senseless as to believe that Christ built an immortal

Church upon a mortal man, after whose death the Church must necessarily fall into ruins? Not upon Peter alone, then, but upon him and his successors was the Church founded; and as these will never fail, the Church will remain for ever. The same must be said of the keys which, as we have said, mean the same thing. How, too, did Christ give this power to Peter alone and to his successors? For He instituted His Church; He instituted her officers; and that not to the honour of persons, but to the good of the Church. These were to endure as long as the Church herself, especially that which, as it is the greatest of all, so it was the most necessary of all: the head of the Church, who was also to be its foundation. Therefore, as the other and lesser offices were not to be transferred to later ages, it was yet necessary that this should be so, as all ancient writers teach.

4. The fourth error of these men is the denial that the Roman Pontiff is the successor of Peter. They say that Peter was either never at Rome at all, or if he were, it cannot be shown that whoever was the Roman Pontiff then was his immediate successor. This error shall be confuted elsewhere. Here we simply bid the assertors fight against the whole world. For there never was any before them, Catholic or heretic, who did not affirm—(1) That Peter died at Rome; (2) That the Roman Pontiffs were his successors. As the Wise Man says therefore (*Wisdom* v. 21): “The whole world shall fight with him against the unwise”.

*And whatsoever thou shalt bind.*

This is a metaphorical saying, by which the same thing is signified as was contained in the two former verses, that Peter had the supreme power of remitting or retaining sins; but I do not consider that it was said to Peter in the same sense as that in which it was said to the other

Apostles, though all authors apparently, except Origen, take it so ; but in the sense in which the Church was built upon Peter alone, and in which to him alone were given the keys, so to bind as no one should be able to loose, and in so to loose as no one should be able to bind. This is to be proved by the same arguments as we have used already to prove his primacy.

It is asked in what the power of binding and loosing consists ? S. Thomas, in his Commentaries, has noticed three errors on the subject to be marked and avoided.

1. That of those who appear arrogantly to think that the priesthood can arbitrarily bind or loose whomsoever they please ; and that every act of theirs, whether right or wrong, will be ratified in heaven. And if we look at the mere words, they do seem to bear this meaning. For " Whatsoever thou shalt bind upon earth, it shall be bound also in heaven ; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth, it shall be loosed also in heaven ". But it is not so. For Christ only intended to give to Peter first, and then to the other Apostles, to perform His offices as if He were on earth : binding those that were to be bound, and loosing those who were to be loosed ; with this sole exception, that Christ would bind or loose in His own power, the Apostles in another's, that is, Christ's. From the fact, then, that He gave over to them His own functions, we understand that they should bind and loose, not according to their own judgment, but according to His ; so that, as S. Cyprian rightly says : " Let no one prejudice Christ the Judge ". This is what theologians and Doctors of the Church call " Clave non errante ".

2. The second error is, that to bind or to loose is nothing else than the declaration that men are already bound or loosed by God, as, in the Old Testament, the priest neither made nor healed the leper, but merely declared that he was actually a leper, or was truly healed of his leprosy.



This error is confuted by the passage before us. For, if this were so, and the priest could only loose and bind in this manner, Christ would not have said, "Whatsoever thou shalt bind upon earth, it shall be bound also in heaven," but, "What is bound in heaven you shall bind on earth". But, as He says, on the contrary, "Whatsoever you shall bind on earth it shall be bound also in heaven, and whatsoever you shall loose on earth it shall be loosed also in heaven," He signifies most clearly that it shall be loosed by the Apostles on earth before it is loosed by God in heaven. This was a gift befitting the Apostles, as representing the Person of Christ, that, as when Christ Himself was on earth, whatever He loosed on earth was loosed by the Father in heaven, so, when He had returned to heaven, whatever the Apostles loosed on earth should be loosed by Him also in heaven. I do not think that the opinion of S. Jerome was at all different, nor that he would have countenanced the above error, but that he only desired to confute the former one.

3. The third error is that, "as in sin there are two things—the fault, and the penalty of eternal punishment—and a man is absolved from both by contrition, the eternal punishment being commuted into a temporal one, the priest can do no more by his absolution than diminish some part of the temporal penalty". This is easily answered, for Christ said (*S. John* xx. 23): "Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them; and whose sins you shall retain, they are retained". The priest, then, remits not only the penalty but the fault. Nor ought it to appear more wonderful, the priest doing this by the sacrament of penitence than by that of baptism, as S. Ambrose says against the Novatians (lib. i. 2, *De Pœnit.*). It may be objected that, as the priest, when he binds, does not make men sinners, but only declares them to be such, so, when he absolves, he does not make men righteous, but

only declares that they are so, and absolved from their sins. The answer may be that this is not a *sequitur*. For the power of binding and loosing was given to the Apostles, not for the righteous, but for sinners. For those who are righteous, that is, who are loosed, God will not have bound. But those who are sinners, that is, who are bound, He desires to have loosed, if they are worthy, and to be bound, if they are unworthy. Besides, the priest is not able to bind and to loose in the same way. He cannot bind in the same manner as that in which he looses. He looses by truly loosing; he binds by not loosing, that is, not by causing, but as S. John says, by retaining sins.

*On earth.*

Some conclude from this that the power of the Church of binding and loosing does not apply to the dead, because they are not upon earth, that is, under the jurisdiction of the Church. So says Strabo, the author of what is termed the ordinary gloss. Whether this be so or not, it can only be said at present that this conclusion does not follow from the words in question, for the words "on earth" are to be referred, not to those who are bound or loosed, but to those who bind or loose; as if Christ had said, "Whatever you who are living on earth shall bind or loose shall be bound or loosed by God, who dwells in heaven," or, more briefly, "Whatever is loosed or bound by you men shall be loosed or bound by God". For men are signified by "earth," and God by "heaven". It is an elegant antithesis by which, from the great distance between heaven and earth, the power given to the Apostles is commended. As if a prince should say to some dependant: "Whatever you do, even in the Indies, I shall value very highly," to show how thoroughly he confided in him, and how ample power he gave to him. For we are less used to ratify what is done in our absence, in our name, by some

one else, than if we were present or at hand. Servants, the longer their master is away, are the more apt to take greater licence, as the parable shows (*S. Matt.* xxiv. 48, 49).

Two premisses ought to be fixed and certain :

1. That the Church has the power of excommunicating even the dead—that is, of depriving them of the prayers of the Church, which seems to have been always practised by SS. Cyprian and Augustin ; and,
2. That the Church has the power of freeing those who are in purgatory by her prayers.

This passage is also one from which the practice of ecclesiastical confession is most clearly proved. For this power which was given to the Apostles could not have been exercised without their knowledge of the sinners, nor could the sins, which are for the most part secret, be known without the explicit confession of the sinner. Thus all the ancient Fathers have based on this passage the practice of penance ; *e.g.*, S. Cyprian (*Serm. on "Lapsed"*), S. Athanasius (*Hom. on the words, "Go into the village"*), S. Basil (*Ep. to Amphiloeh.*). We may add that Christ, in these words, not only gave the Apostles the power of absolving, but He laid upon all Christians the obligation of confession.

The meaning, then, will be not only that whatever the Apostles loosed on earth, He Himself would loose in heaven : but also that He would neither loose nor bind anything in heaven, except what His Apostles or their successors had loosed or bound on earth. For He bestowed on them His own power to govern the Church for Him. So that He would have everyone who needed forgiveness come to the Apostles or their successors as if to Him, if He were on earth, and seek from them absolution when they had made their confession, as, if He were living on earth, He would absolve no one from his sins unless he had first made confession of them.

But He as God could do so without that sacrament, the Apostles as men could only do so through the sacrament ; as if that were the hand of Christ ; that is, as if a king when sending some minister to a distant province to govern for him, should say : "Whatever you do I approve," and he should give orders to the people to refer any question or difference to his substitute as to himself, and plead all causes before him ; not that he deprived himself of his power, so that he could not judge a cause if he pleased, but that, by the transference of all ordinary power to his substitute, he reserved the extraordinary to himself. This is to be understood of Christ and the Apostles. The ordinary remedies instituted in the Church for the remission of sins are the sacraments, without which men cannot remit them. Christ is able to do this, but He does it extraordinarily, and very much more rarely than through the sacraments. For He would not have men trust to extraordinary means, which are both rare and uncertain, for the remission of sins ; but He would have them seek the ordinary, and, so to say, the visible aids of the sacraments. And He has, therefore, given the precept, as of baptism and the Eucharist, so of confession and penance.

Verse 20. *That they should tell no man.*

Why Christ so frequently forbade His acts, which clearly discovered Him to be the Son of God, to be made public has been explained (viii. 4 ; ix. 30). Why He forbade it now, we learn from S. Mark (viii. 30), S. Luke (ix. 20), and S. Matthew in verse following. For all these three Evangelists relate that Christ, immediately on Peter's confession that He was the Son of God, began to explain to them how He must suffer many things at Jerusalem, and be put to death. From this, it is concluded that He would not have the Apostles publish it, that He was the Son of God, lest the hearers, if they should afterwards see Him dying,

should be offended by that weakness of the flesh and lose their faith. For, while He was hanging on the Cross, some of those who had heard that He was the Son of God, said (xxvii. 40) : " If Thou be the Son of God, come down from the Cross ". Christ would not have that happen to all at His death which did happen to some. This is the reason that S. Chrysostom, S. Jerome, and Bede give.

A double question here arises. 1. Why (chap. x. 7) He sent the Apostles to preach the kingdom of God, which was nothing but the coming of the Son of God? 2. Why He so often called Himself the Son of God, or called God His Father, if He would not have men know that He was the Son of God? The heretic who answers that that mission was merely temporal, says nothing to the purpose. For, what does it matter whether it were temporal or eternal, if they preached the Advent of the Son of God? Origen (*Tract. i. on S. Matt.*) answers, that the Apostles preached not Christ, but the kingdom of God. S. Jerome, on the contrary, says that they preached Christ indeed, but not Jesus; that is, they taught that He was a righteous man, a Prophet, the author of many extraordinary miracles, the Messiah promised by God; but not that He was the Son of the living God: that is, the true essential God by nature, which Peter now confessed Him to be; for perhaps even the Apostles themselves, at that time, did not understand this. And He now forbade them to say that He was Jesus Christ, as is found in some copies. For Jesus is the name of God, and means the Saviour; Christ is the name of the Man. The reason seems a good one, and is approved by S. Ambrose (*On S. Luke ix.*) and Euthymius. It is certain that before His passover, Christ never told His disciples to preach that He was the Son of God, and He never very openly said so; because, while some were offended at His calling God His Father, He derided their halting opinion by the ambiguity of the term, as in *S. John*

x. 34, 35, 36: "Is it not written in your law, I said you are gods? If He called them gods, to whom the word of God was spoken, and the Scripture cannot be broken, do you say of him whom the Father hath sanctified and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest, because I said I am the Son of God?"

Verse 21. *From that time.*

It is plain that the Evangelist wished to show that Christ, from the time when Peter confessed Him to be the Son of God, began to speak of His coming death, and not once, but very frequently, to admonish the Apostles as to what was to happen; as if the Evangelist had said, from that time He did not keep the knowledge back as a secret that He must suffer, but spoke of it openly and plainly. We may ask why He did so at this time rather than before? The reason is obvious, as S. Chrysostom, Euthymius, and Theophylact show. It was because He had not been sufficiently known by the Apostles, or declared by public confession to be the Son of God by nature; and it was to be feared that if He had made mention of the shame of His future death, they might be offended, or leave Him, or be hindered in the course of their faith. But why afterwards? For the same reason clearly; for when they had confessed Him to be the Son of God, they seemed to be prepared for having the mystery of His impending death explained to them. It was very necessary that this should be done, lest afterwards, if they had not been forewarned and had seen Him suffer, they might have doubted of His Divinity, as has been observed by Theophylact. He did the same at another time, and for a similar cause (*S. John* xvi. 1). Some give another reason: that by His own example Christ might strengthen His disciples, as is learnt from verse 24 and 1 *S. Peter* ii. 21.

*Must.*

Not absolutely, but from His Father's will, by which He

must suffer and die for the salvation of men (*S. Luke xxiv. 46*).

*Verse 22. And taking Him.*

*Προσλαβόμενος*, separating or leading Him apart, as if he did not venture to blame Him before the others. So say S. Chrysostom and Jerome, Bede and Euthymius. *Παρά προσλαμβάνειν* in the Scriptures is often used to express compassion, as *Rom. xiv. 1*: "Now him that is weak in faith, take unto you," that is, to take compassion; *xv. 7*: "Wherefore receive one another," take him to you, or practise mutual compassion one to another. This agrees well with the context that Peter, when he heard of Christ's approaching sufferings, moved with compassion, that is, "receiving Him," began to dissuade Him. This meaning is adopted by S. Jerome. "S. Peter," he says, "receiving Christ into his sympathy."

*Began to rebuke Him.*

Not as blaming Him, but as a friend giving Him counsel, as Bede and Euthymius think. SS. Chrysostom and Jerome speak of the modesty of Peter on this occasion; for, as before (verse 16), in confessing Christ to be the Son of God, he had shown greater faith than the rest of the Apostles, so he now showed more love for Him.

*Lord, be it far from Thee.*

Our version could not have rendered better the Greek *ἴλεως σοί*. No doubt the Greek translator of *S. Matthew* borrowed the expression from the LXX.; for these used it in two places and senses—(1) when it meant *pax tibi*, from the Hebrew *שָׁלוֹם לָכֶם* (as in *Gen. xliii. 23*); or (2) when it meant *חֲלִילָה* "prohibition," that is, *absit* (as in *1 Kings xiv. 45*; *xx. 2, 9*). It is, therefore, a word of aversion and deprecation against what is threatened from happening.

Verse 23. *Who turning.*

That is, looking back (as *S. Mark* viii. 33). It is perhaps a Hebraism by which a contrary answer is given, as if the Evangelist had said that Peter rebuked Christ because He would suffer, but Christ on the other part rebuked Peter because he would not have Him suffer (as *Ps.* lxx. 2.; lxxxiv. 7): that is, as Thou first destroyedst us, so now on the other hand Thou shalt bring us back again.

*Go behind Me.*

לך אחרי a Hebrew expression, meaning properly "Follow Me," as S. Hilary explains it; as if Christ had said: "Thou oughtest rather to follow Me and imitate My suffering than call Me away from it". Origen (*Tract.* i. on *S. Matt.*) and S. Jerome (in his *Commentaries*) so explain it. So too S. Augustin (*Serm.* xiii. *de verb. Dom. sec. Matt.*); for he renders it, "Retire behind Me". It is certain that they are the words of one commanding another to go back, as Christ had said to Satan before (iv. 10).

*Satan.*

S. Hilary shrank from the idea of the name of Satan having been given to S. Peter; and he takes the passage as if Christ had said to Peter "*Vade retro*," and then turned, as it were, to the devil who had put it into the mind of Peter to dissuade Him from death, and said: "Satan, thou art an offence unto Me". This is the more to be wondered, because in his *Comments. on the Psalms* (cxxxix.) he says that Peter himself had been called Satan.

We may wonder with S. Augustin (*Serm.* xiii. *de verb. Dom. sec. S. Matt.*) why Christ in so short a time called the same Peter both blessed and Satan. S. Jerome says that the Church was not yet built on him, and that he therefore erred, and could be called Satan. S. Augustin and Theophylact say that he was called "blessed" because not



flesh and blood, but the Father in heaven had revealed it to him, and "Satan" when he savoured not of the things of God, but of the things of men.

Verse 24. *Then.*

That is, before He rebuked Peter, as would appear from S. Luke, who has placed these words before the rebuke of Peter (ix. 23), although S. Chrysostom and Theophylact think otherwise.

*To His disciples.*

S. Luke (ix. 23) says He said to them all, and S. Mark (viii. 34).

This divarication between the two Evangelists may be explained in two ways. Either that Christ spoke to the Apostles alone in the presence of the multitude, and before witnesses, or that He wished what He said addressed to the Apostles especially, but that the multitude thought that what He said to His Apostles was said to themselves also.

*If any man will.*

S. Chrysostom, Euthymius, and Theophylact rightly observe that our free-will is fully established by these words.

*Let him deny himself.*

The meaning of these words has been variously explained. S. Jerome and Bede (*in loc.*), S. Gregory (*Hom. x. on Ezekiel*), think the meaning to be simply the putting off of the old man, and the putting on of the new. "Then," says Bede, "do we deny ourselves when we avoid what we were before, and strive for that to which we are called anew." But it is clear that the present subject was not the manner of our lives, but of our deaths, as is shown by verse 25. S. Chrysostom shows better what it is to deny ourselves from the denying of others. To deny others is to

despise and forsake them, to take no account or care for them, to think their lives of no consequence. This is the same as to deny ourselves ; to hold ourselves of no value ; to despise life for the sake of Christ when need be, as is urged on us in verse 25. For Christ does not call the soul self there, but the life of the body, which we ought to hold in contempt that our souls may live. For he who will save his life, that is, the life of his body, shall lose it, that is, the life of his soul ; as is explained in chap. x. 38, 39.

Verse 26. *Suffer the loss of his own soul.*

A metaphor from the courts. For if a man sue for any property, however precious, and also for his life, it would profit him little to gain the former but lose his life ; and the question here is one of judgment, from what follows in verse 27.

*Or what exchange shall a man give.*

A metaphor taken either from the courts or from war. In the former a man may redeem his life for money ; but for the life of the soul in the judgment of God no money and no compensation can be received, nor can God the Judge of all be corrupted by bribes. In war, too, the vanquished often redeem their lives by ransom. But in the judgment he cannot so buy himself off. For what exchange shall he give for his soul ? Christ plays upon the double meaning of the terms, and argues tacitly from the life of the body to the life of the soul. For the word "life" (*anima*) means either, as in the preceding verse, and in chap. x. 38, 39 ; as if it were said : As for the life of the body in war or in judgment, no one can make a really equivalent compensation, much less can he make one for the life of his soul.

Verse 27. *For the Son of man.*

S. Jerome thinks that Christ said this to comfort His disciples. It may rather be thought that He added it,

because He had spoken of an exchange of souls which had been transferred from the judgment of the courts. He proves by these words that no exchange can be given for the soul, because it is no chance judge, but the Son of man who will come to judgment; nor will He come in any chance manner, but in the glory of His Father and with His holy angels, so that he cannot need any of our good things. Why He is called the Son of man has been shown (viii. 20).

*In the glory of His Father.*

"In" is a Hebraism for "with". He calls the glory not His own, but His Father's; either because, though it was His own, the Father had given it to Him, or, as S. Chrysostom and Euthymius think, to show that that nature was common to Him with the Father. For He calls the angels not His own, but the Father's; but He was the Lord of the angels, was the true God, and had His glory in common with the Father. It is said that He would come in glory—as if He were not in glory then—because, although He had the same glory then, it was hidden to be revealed hereafter.

Verse 28. *There are some of them that stand here.*

The word "stand," as has been said before, does not always in Scripture refer to the posture of the body, but is used for the personal presence.

*That shall not taste death.*

A Hebraism for "shall not die". So *S. Luke* ix. 27; *Heb.* ii. 9. With the Hebrews, "to see" means "to experience". The Greeks more properly use the word *γεύεσθαι*, "to taste". So the ecclesiastical writers (S. Ambrose, *On S. Luke* ix.) understand it of the death of the soul; as if Christ had said: "There are some here who

shall not be condemned when the Son of man comes" ; or, " who shall not sin any more until they see the Son of man come ". But this is somewhat forced.

*In His kingdom.*

There are many opinions as to the meaning of these words. Some explain them of the last judgment, of which Christ had spoken in the preceding verse. This seems consistent with the context ; but how some of those who stood there should not die till the day of judgment does not seem so. Some think it spoken of S. John the Evangelist, whom they believe not to have died, though I only find it actually in Strabus ; and it is not in agreement with Scripture, for S. John himself seems to have confuted the idea (xxi. 23). Others explain it as referring to the period after Christ's Resurrection. For He calls that the kingdom of God because He then rose in glory (as in xxvi. 29 ; *S. Mark* xiv. 25 ; *S. Luke* xxii. 29, 30). This meets the approbation of some of the Moderns, but seems scarcely probable ; both because Christ calls it the kingdom of God, for the devil was now conquered, but not His own kingdom, for He had not yet come in His glory ; and because, if He had said that, He would have said nothing. For what wonder would it have been if some of the disciples were not to die before they saw Him risen from the dead, when not only some, but all saw Him ? For when He said, " there are some," He showed clearly that not all the disciples, but only a few, and those the elect, and those to whom were granted that singular privilege, should see that kingdom of which He spoke before they died. The opinion, therefore, of all the Ancients was true (Origen, *Tr.* iii. in *S. Matt.* ; S. Hilary, *Can.* xvi. ; S. Chrysostom ; Bede ; Theophylact ; Euthymius, *In Comm.* ; S. Ambrose, ix., *On S. Luke* ; S. Augustin, ii., *On Gal.* ; Remigius, *In S. Thomas*), that the kingdom of God meant the Transfiguration, which not all,

but only Peter, James, and John merited to see before they died. This may be shown from the fact that all the Evangelists immediately add, "after six days". Christ was transfigured before these three Apostles. Besides which, if the words cannot be understood of the day of judgment, or of the time of the Resurrection, they must necessarily be understood of the Transfiguration. For what Bede and S. Gregory (*Ap. S. Thomam*) say of the propagation of the Gospel and the Church seems foreign to the purpose. Christ calls His Transfiguration His kingdom, not because it was such properly, but because it was the image of it. It may, however, be justly doubted why Christ said, as if it were a matter of great moment, that some of those who stood by should die before they saw His kingdom if He meant His Transfiguration, which happened six days after, when not only the three who saw it, but all the Apostles were alive. The answer may be that the words may be referred to that far distant kingdom of which He had said, in the preceding verse: "The Son of man shall come in His glory". Not to die before the sight of this kingdom was indeed a very great thing; but that very kingdom these three Apostles did see, not in itself, but in figure; not present, but in a glass darkly (*per transennam*).

## CHAPTER XVII.

THE TRANSFIGURATION OF CHRIST—HE CURES THE  
LUNATIC CHILD, FORETELLS HIS PASSION, AND  
PAYS THE DIDRACHMA.

Verse 1. *After six days.*

REFERRING to the same period, S. Mark (ix. 2) and S. Luke (ix. 28) say that these events took place after eight days. The difficulty is answered by S. Jerome, S. Chrysostom, Bede, Theophylact, and Euthymius on the passage, and by S. Augustin (*De Consens.*, ii. 56) by the assertion that S. Matthew and S. Mark have not counted the day on which the events happened, but S. Luke has ; that S. Matthew and S. Mark count the time exclusively and S. Luke inclusively of the two days on which the events happened ; or that possibly S. Luke only wrote generally, and therefore said "about eight days".

*Taketh.*

Many questions may here be asked.

1. Why Christ chose to be transfigured? To this question S. Hilary, S. Chrysostom, and Euthymius reply that it was to console the disciples when they should be grieved at His death; Theophylact, that it was to preserve the truth of His words (xxi. 27), that He would come in the glory of His Father. Either of these opinions is more probable than that of the heretics, that Christ wished to show that His death would not be by compulsion, but of His own free-will, as He was the Lord of so much glory.

2. The next question is, why He was not transfigured in the sight of all the disciples? The answer is easily seen in verse 9, where He commanded those three Apostles, who had seen His glory, not to inform any person of the vision till the Son of man had risen from the dead; for Christ would not have His glory published for the reasons there given.

3. The third question is, why was His glory shown to three witnesses, and neither more nor fewer? Probably because He wished that there should be some witnesses of His future glory; for "in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word shall stand" (*Deut.* xix. 15; *S. Matt.* xviii. 16). In addition, it may be said that He had three disciples more especially capable of receiving His secrets. These three He used to take with Him on His more private occasions (as in *S. Matt.* xxvi. 37).

4. The fourth question is, why He pleased to show this spectacle to these rather than to the others? One reason has already been given; another is that Peter was both the first of the Apostles and loved Him most of all. He Himself loved S. John the most. S. James was the next after S. Peter, and the most ardent in faith. As such, he was the first put to death by Herod (*Acts* xii. 2). This reason is given by Origen (*Tract.* iii. on *S. Matt.*), S. Ambrose (*On S. Luke* ix.), S. Augustin (*On Galat.* ii.), S. Jerome, Theophylact, and Euthymius (in their *Commentaries*). SS. Ambrose and Augustin are mistaken in saying that this James was the brother of the Lord; for the Evangelist says that He was the brother of John, and the son of Zebedee.

*Into a high mountain.*

The Evangelists do not say what mountain this was, nor apparently does any ancient author of credit. It was long the opinion that it was Mount Tabor, which S. Jerome

says, in his *Loc. Hebr.*, was in the midst of the plains of Galilee, and was very lofty and round in shape. Whether it were this or some other, we may ask why Christ went up into a mountain to display His glory? One reason is found in *S. Luke* ix. 28. He says that Christ went up to pray. He was accustomed, for this purpose, to ascend mountains, where the solitude was greater and more complete, and there was a wider view of the heavens (*S. Mark* vi. 46; *S. Luke* vi. 12). The words of *S. Luke*, "He went up to pray," are not perhaps to be taken as if He went up with that intention, but because in all events of great importance it was His custom to commence with prayer; and He probably did not inform the Apostles when He went apart from them that He was going up the mountain for His Transfiguration, but for prayer, lest He might give occasion for envy to those who were left below. The glory of God has most frequently been shown from mountains, which are nearer to heaven and more remote from men. So the majesty of God appeared to Moses on Mount Sinai (*Exod.* xix. 11), and was, as *S. Hilary* says, a type of the Transfiguration.

Verse 2. *And He was transfigured before them.*

We should observe, as *S. Jerome* says, that Christ did not change the nature of His body, but only the external form and appearance.

*As snow.*

Almost all the Greek copies read, "as light," *ὡς τὸ φῶς*—our version says, "as snow"—as do some Greek copies. This reading is probably the correct one, both because *S. Mark* (ix. 3) has it, and *S. Hilary* and almost all ancient writers concur, and because the comparison is more just and more common. For we do not compare whiteness to the sun, but to snow; and what is bright to the sun. The



glory of the blessed also is prefigured by white robes, as in *Apoc.* i. 14; iii. 4, 5, 18; iv. 4; vi. 11; vii. 9, 13; xix. 14.

Verse 3. *Moses and Elias.*

We may reasonably enquire why Christ wished for the presence of these witnesses from the other world. S. Hilary says that it was to confirm the doctrine of the Resurrection, by the restoration to life of Moses. But the question here was not of the Resurrection, but of the future kingdom of Christ. There appear to have been two reasons: one, that the Apostles might not think the thing a fiction; the other, that the future kingdom of Christ might be represented to the life, at the advent of which two witnesses are mentioned by S. John (*Apoc.* xi. 3) as about to be sent. The reason of these two having been chosen rather than any others, is held by all ancient authors to have been that the Law might be represented by Moses, and the Prophets by Elias; and that the Law and the Prophets tend towards Christ, and have their fulfilment and termination in Him. So Tertullian, iv., *Cont. Marcion*. From this he refutes these heretics, showing that Christ was not contrary to the Law and the Prophets. S. Hilary, S. Jerome, Bede, Euthymius (*in loc.*), S. Ambrose (*On S. Luke ix.*), S. Augustin (*De Quinq. Hæres.*, vii.), and in another place S. Chrysostom and Euthymius, give as reasons that both Moses and Elias worked many miracles, and that, as some said that Christ was Elias, others one of the ancient prophets, and Moses was the most ancient, Christ, to show that He was the Lord of life, brought up the still living Elias, and Moses, who was dead, as His witnesses. It is probable, as S. Jerome says, that Christ was willing to gratify the Scribes and Pharisees who had demanded a sign from heaven, and He, therefore, called Elias from heaven, and Moses from Hades (*de Inferno*). Others, as Euthymius, say that the disciples might imi-

tate the meekness of Moses and the zeal of Elias. Tertullian (*Adv. Prax.*) thinks that the promise of God in *Numbers* xii. 8, that He would speak with Moses face to face, was fulfilled here.

The truest reason of the appearance of Moses and Elias would, perhaps, appear to be that which a learned Doctor of the Church of our own times has signified: that Christ was to represent the image of His second coming. But before this, Moses and Elias would come, as is clearly to be gathered from *Apoc.* xi. 3: "And I will give unto My two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and sixty days clothed in sackcloth. These are the two olive trees and the two candlesticks that stand before the Lord of the earth. And if any man will hurt them, fire shall come out of their mouths, and shall devour their enemies; and if any man will hurt them, in this manner must he be slain. These have power to shut heaven that it rain not in the days of their prophecy, and they have power over waters to turn them into blood, and to strike the earth with all plagues as often as they will." In these words Moses is openly described.

We may ask whether they truly appeared? That they did so is the opinion of all the authorities except Strabus and S. Thomas. The former (*On S. Luke* ix.), thinks that the appearance was not of themselves, but of their similitudes. The latter, in his comments on the passage, imagines that Elias, indeed, who was not dead, was truly present; but that Moses, who was dead, did not appear truly and perfectly, but that his soul alone did so, taking not his own but some other body. The opinion of all others is more probable, that each was present truly and each wholly. It was not fitting that the truth should be proved by a falsehood; and it is agreeable to reason that as Christ showed not a false and shadowy, but His true and express glory, so that it should be confirmed not by

false and imaginary, but by true witnesses. It has been asked how the Apostles could recognise Moses and Elias, whom they had never seen? Euthymius answers that their forms had been well described in the ancient books of the Hebrews, or were familiar from tradition. Theophylact supposes that the Apostles might have known them from the conversations they carried on. Moses might have said: "Thou art He whose Passion I prefigured in the Lamb which was slain, and in the Passover which I celebrated". And Elias, perhaps: "Thou art He whose Resurrection I foreshadowed in the widow's son whom I raised to life". S. Luke (ix. 30, 31) relates that there were conversations among them, but not on these subjects: "And behold two men were talking with Him, and they were Moses and Elias appearing in majesty, and they spoke of His decease which He should accomplish in Jerusalem". They did this probably to confirm what Christ had said just before of His coming death, and that the Apostles might no longer be offended. Again, it may have been, as many think, that the Apostles knew them by inward inspiration. S. Luke says that Peter and they who were with him were heavy with sleep, which S. Chrysostom supposes to have been not true sleep, but a stupor closely resembling sleep; for how could they sleep in the midst of so much glory? Unless, perhaps, in the meantime they began to sleep, whilst Christ was praying, as they did at the Passover; and by divine permission, that in the meanwhile Moses and Elias might come. S. Luke appears to point to this when he says: "And waking, they saw His glory, and the two men that stood with Him".

Verse 4. *Answering, Let us make here three tabernacles.*

"Answering" is a Hebraism for "speaking". S. Peter said nothing of himself or the other Apostles, he only spoke of Christ, Moses, and Elias. It has been doubted-

why he wished to make tabernacles there, and to remain in the place. S. Chrysostom, Theophylact, and Euthymius say that it was for fear of the Jews, lest Christ, as He had said before, should fall into their hands, whilst they would be safe on the top of the mountain, and, if needs were, be defended by Moses and Elias, the former of whom destroyed the Egyptians and Amalekites, and the latter two or three centurions, with their soldiers, by calling down fire from heaven. But this idea seems hardly worthy of S. Peter. The true reason seems to have been that which S. Peter himself gave: "It is good for us to be here". Some explain the word "good," as used here, as meaning not useful and safe, but pleasant. The glorious company of Christ, Moses, and Elias pleased S. Peter, and he supposed that he himself and the other two would enjoy it, if they remained on the mountain always. There seems another reason. S. Luke (ix. 33) says that S. Peter said this when he saw Moses and Elias departing, and he was grieved, and wished to remain there always.

Verse 5. *Behold a bright cloud.*

The majesty of God is frequently revealed from clouds (*Exod.* xvi. 10; xix. 9, *et passim*; and David, *Ps.* cvii. 5). To vindicate His majesty, Christ will come on the clouds to judgment (*sup.*, xxiv. 30; xxvi. 64).

It is easy to see why this should be so. A cloud is of heaven. The divine majesty was therefore declared by a cloud, that so God who spoke, and who is the ruler of the heavens, might be shown to be true, and not false nor earthly. This is the reason why the cloud here descended, that the voice which said from heaven, "This is My beloved Son," might be believed to have been no other than the voice of God, as Euthymius says. It might have been, as S. Ambrose suggests, a cloud interposed between the Apostles and heaven, to enable them to endure the

majesty of God speaking to them, as was the case with Moses when God spoke to him through a cloud. S. Chrysostom and Theophylact have observed that this cloud was bright, and not like that in the Old Testament, dark and black, because God came down now, not to terrify, but to teach. It may more probably have been because the brightness might agree with the subject in hand, the glory and transfiguration of Christ.

*And lo, a voice out of the cloud, saying.*

S. Chrysostom rightly observes that this cloud was sent after Moses and Elias had departed, that without doubt it might be referred to no other than Christ.

*This is My beloved Son.*

SS. Ambrose and Jerome think that there should be an emphasis on the word "This," as if the meaning were, "Not Moses, and not Elias, but *this* is My beloved Son". There seems indeed to be an emphasis on the word, but a different one. For the Apostles did not doubt that not Moses, nor Elias, but Christ, was the Son of the living God, when a little before, when they had not yet beheld the glory of Christ, Peter had confessed it. There was no need, therefore, that Christ should be distinguished from Moses and Elias by a voice from heaven.

The emphasis, then, is as follows. This—that is, He whom you have seen like the sun and full of glory—is My Son. For this voice was not sent to teach the disciples that Christ was the Son of God, but to show them in what likeness He would come again, and to confirm what Christ had said (S. *Matt.* xvi. 27): "The Son of man shall come in the glory of His Father, with His angels"; and to approve the confession of S. Peter (v. 16): "Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God," that he might be a more sure witness of the future kingdom of Christ; as he himself

testifies (2 *Pet.* i. 18): "This voice we heard brought from heaven when we were with Him in the holy mount".

*Hear ye Him.*

God appointed, or at least showed, that Christ was their Lawgiver, and was to be obeyed. "To hear" means, in Hebrew, "to obey" (*Heb.* i. 6). Tertullian (v., *Marcion*, lib. iv.) explains it thus: "Hear Him, that is, not Moses nor Elias, as if in this place the Law and the Prophets were done away". The followers of Calvin would have us fix these words in our minds as if we should listen to none besides, but to Christ Himself only. It were to be wished that their advice were followed more carefully, and that men would listen to no heretics at all. We should never have any such, then, for our guides, and they would have none to listen to them.

*Verse 6. Fell upon their face.*

The followers of Calvin explain this wrongly. They say that the Apostles fell on their faces to pay worship, for the Hebrew words נפל עלפני mean this. This is frequently the case, but not always. For (1 *Kings* xvii. 49) Goliath fell on his face, but not to worship, but as dying; and Daniel (viii. 18; x. 9) did the same, but not to worship, but as amazed and terrified by the vision.

In the present instance this meaning cannot be received; for the Evangelist (verse 7) has stated why they so fell. Hence it is clear that they were as lifeless, or half-dead; and Christ is said to have touched them, as we touch those who are in great prostration, to restore them to themselves. They fell down, then, from fear, not veneration. But why did they fear? Who that heard God speaking would not fear? (*Ps.* xxviii. 4, 5, 6; *Amos* iii. 8).

*Verse 9. Tell the vision to no man.*

They were probably prohibited, as S. Jerome and Bede

think, from speaking of what had happened, that they might not inform the people at large of it; for no evil could have happened from the other Apostles knowing of it; and there would have been this good, that they would have been the more confirmed in faith, whilst if the multitude had been informed of it, the unhappy result might have followed which has been mentioned before (xvi. 20). For they who had heard of Christ's glory, if they had subsequently beheld His Crucifixion, might have thought themselves deceived as it were by a false report of His glory, and have fallen away from faith. So think S. Chrysostom, Euthymius, S. Jerome, Bede, and Theophylact. It appears more in accordance with the Gospel that Christ did not desire even the other Apostles to know it. (*Vide S. Mark ix. 10; S. Luke ix. 36.*)

*Till the Son of man be risen from the dead.*

Why this was not to be revealed before has been explained already. Why Christ wished it to be known afterwards is clear. The evil that might have happened before could not have happened subsequently, and the Gospel was then to be published everywhere.

Verse 10. *Why, then, do the Scribes say?*

It is not easy to see why the Apostles asked this. The followers of Calvin wickedly assert that the Apostles asked the question because they did not believe that Christ was the Messiah; S. Jerome, because they thought that He had come in glory when they saw Him transfigured, and yet Elias had gone away. It would appear that their question was to be understood from the words of Christ: "Till the Son of man be risen from the dead". But not understanding the mystery of the Resurrection, they thought that Christ would come before His death in the glory of which He had spoken, to render to every man

according to his works. For that He will come after His Resurrection they could not yet understand ; because then they thought that Christ's coming was at hand, and they had not yet seen Elias come ; at least, in the manner in which it was said that He would come, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children and the hearts of the children to the fathers, and to restore all things (for in the Transfiguration He seemed not so much to have come as to have appeared), they ask how the Scribes say that before His advent Elias must come ?

That was not the private opinion of the Scribes alone, but one shared in by the whole Jewish people. But as the Scribes were the Doctors of the Law, and as they probably used to explain that tradition to the people, it was ascribed to them. So among ourselves the people say that the preachers say this or that when not the preachers only, but all Christians, and even Scripture itself, says it. For the unlettered, and they who do not read the Scriptures, generally ascribe all things to their teaching and preaching.

Verse 11. *Elias is come.*

The present is here put, in the usual manner, for the future or indefinite, with a word signifying obligation, as Elias ought to come, or should come (so *infra*, verse 23, and *S. John* xxi. 23). "Should not die ;" that is, would not die, or ought not to die. Christ says that Elias will come. The followers of Calvin say that what He said about the future coming of Elias is to be referred to S. John the Baptist, as Christ, indeed, seems to explain in the verse following. But Christ does not say that Elias has come already, but that he will come ; for His words in the verse following are spoken not of Elias, who He here says shall come, but of S. John the Baptist, who had come in the spirit and power of Elias.

From the fact that He speaks of S. John in the past



tense, and of Elias in the future (or He speaks of an appointed time in the present put for the future), they ought to have concluded that He intended to teach that, besides John, who had already come in the spirit of Elias, the very true Elias himself would come hereafter: as also from the words, "he will restore all things," which John did not do. Their gloss on John's having restored all things, because he preached Christ, who restored all things, is nothing to the purpose. For in this case all who have preached Christ have restored all things. But it is clear that Christ opposed Elias to all others, as if he alone, after Himself, should restore all things. The words appear to be a kind of paraphrase of *Malachi* iv. 6; or it may be that Elias is said to be about to restore all things, partly because he did restore many *per se*; partly, and much more, because he was to be the sign of the restitution of all things, that is, of the consummation of the world, which could not be in the case of John. The testimony of *Malachi*, too, is clear (iv. 5). It is evident that the Prophet is speaking of the great and terrible day of judgment, before which the promised Elias was to come. This, therefore, is to be understood not of John, but of the true Elias. Again, the author of *Ecclesiasticus* (xlviii. 10), speaking of Elias, and alluding to the testimony of *Malachi*, says: "Who are registered in the judgments of time to appease the wrath of the Lord, to reconcile the heart of the father to the son, and to restore the tribes of Jacob". But they say that this is not a canonical book. Granting that it be so, yet a very ancient tradition is certainly contained in it, which Christ confirmed in the same words, that the true Elias would restore all things. Again, S. John in the *Apocalypse* (xi. 3-6) writes so clearly that Moses and Elias would come, that it cannot be denied with any sense or modesty. "And I will give unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and sixty days, clothed in sackcloth. These are the two

olive trees, and the two candlesticks that stand before the Lord of the earth. And if any man will hurt them, fire shall come out of their mouths, and shall devour their enemies ; and if any man will hurt them, in this manner must he be slain. These have power to shut heaven, that it rain not in the days of their prophecy ; and they have power over waters to turn them into blood, and to strike the earth with all plagues as often as they will."

Who these were he immediately describes. "These have power to shut heaven." Who does not see that this is Elias ? And, "they have power over waters". Who does not see that Moses is pointed out as by the finger ? This was the reason why Moses and Elias, rather than any other of the Prophets, should be present at the Transfiguration. 1. Christ pleased to show His future coming visibly to these three Apostles. 2. Because, in His second advent, Moses and Elias were to be sent before to prepare His way, as John had done at His first coming. Lastly, this was the opinion of all the Ancients ; of Elias it was most constant, and without any dissentient voice ; of Moses it was less constant, for some thought that he, and others Enoch, would be the witness of the second advent of the Lord.

The followers of Calvin object that in the following (twelfth) verse Christ says : "I say unto you that Elias is already come" ; and (verse 13) : "Then the disciples understood that He spoke to them of John the Baptist, and that John came in the spirit and power of Elias, as the angel testified" (*S. Luke* i. 17). But we maintain that Christ did not, therefore, deny, but rather, in plain terms, confirmed the fact that Elias also would come before His second advent.

But when Christ said, "Elias has come already," He wished only to signify that which pertains to the result, that is, to the sign of the first advent, and to the preaching

of repentance (both of which Elias was to do in the second coming), to show that he had come already, because in the first coming John had done both. For Malachi said of the second coming: "Behold I will send you Elias" (iv. 5), as of the first coming he had said of S. John the Baptist: "Behold I send my angel, and he shall prepare the way before my face" (iii. 1).

Christ, therefore, desired to say that this was not the cause of the unbelief of the Jews, but their perverseness and obstinacy. For the Elias who had been promised before His first coming, that is, John, had come as Christ had declared (*supra*, xi. 14).

Verse 14. *For he is a lunatic.*

S. Mark (ix. 17) calls him dumb, and (verse 25) deaf. S. Luke (ix. 39) says that he was possessed. Hence it follows that he was not, as many think, the subject of disease by nature, but that he was afflicted by a devil. Why, then, is he termed a lunatic? Some think that he was, both by nature and disease, a lunatic, and vexed by a devil. But the opinion of S. Chrysostom (*Hom. lviii.*) is more probable: that he was not a lunatic either by nature or disease, but by the craft and persecution of a devil. For S. Mark calls him deaf and dumb; S. Luke says that he was a demoniac; and S. Matthew that he was a lunatic. Different authorities have given many different reasons why the devil makes some men lunatics. Origen (*Tract. iv. on S. Matt.*), S. Chrysostom (*Hom. lviii.*), S. Jerome (*Comment. on S. Matt. iv. 24*), say that it is to disparage the moon as a creature of God, as if it were the cause of diseases; Bede and Euthymius, to bring ill-feeling and hatred on the Creator Himself, that men might blaspheme Him. It is not improbable that the devil sometimes does this for the love of dissimulation and concealment. S. Luke seems to imply that the devil did not

dwell in the young man always, but sometimes went out and sometimes came back. Christ also seemed to signify the same thing when He said to the devil: "Deaf and dumb spirit, I command thee go out of him, and enter not any more into him" (*S. Mark ix. 24*).

Verse 15. *And I brought him to Thy disciples, and they could not cure him.*

It is very likely that while Christ was with the three disciples on the mount, the man brought his son to the others, as S. Hilary observes. He says, somewhat too hardly, that as the people formerly while Moses was in the mount, so the Apostles now while Christ was in the mount, lost their faith. For if they had less faith than they ought to have had, as Christ (verse 20) seems to signify, yet they assuredly did not lose it. S. Chrysostom appears to think something of the same kind; for he says that the Apostles could not cast out the devil "because the (three) columns of the Apostles were not present". He does not say, however, that they lost their faith. S. Mark (ix. 14) gives a fuller and more copious account of the event. When Christ had come down from the mountain, He found the disciples and Scribes disputing, with a great multitude around them, and He asked them what they were disputing about. One of the multitude answered: "My son is a lunatic and suffereth much, for he falleth often into the fire and often into the water, and I brought him to Thy disciples; and they could not cure him" (verses 17, 18).

From this account it is easy to see that the Scribes had been disputing with the disciples of Christ, and upbraiding them because they could not cast out the devil, and perhaps calling the power which the Apostles had affirmed themselves to have received from Christ for casting out devils and performing other miracles a sham and a delusion. S. Chrysostom, S. Jerome, Theophylact, and Bede think that

the man silently accused the disciples to Christ. This can easily be believed of a man who was a Jew, but we may judge him more kindly : that it was not as if he would accuse the disciples, but he might exaggerate the malice of the devil and the gravity of the case, and thus have said that they could not cast him out.

Verse 17. *O unbelieving generation.*

Almost all ancient writers (S. Hilary, S. Chrysostom S. Jerome, Bede, Theophylact, and S. Thomas in his *Commentaries*) think that Christ said this, not of the disciples, but of the father of the youth, and of the whole Jewish nation. This is very probable, for S. Mark says : "He (that is, Christ) answered the father of the youth : O unbelieving generation," &c. Christ, therefore, called the father of the youth and the other Jews a generation. Not the weakest argument for this is found in the fact that the father said to Christ : "If Thou canst do anything, help us, having compassion on us" (verse 21), as if he doubted the power of Christ, and that Christ answered : "If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth," as S. Chrysostom and Theophylact observe. Some think that the words in question were addressed to the disciples alone, as Origen (*Tract. iv. on S. Matt.*). Others, again, that they were spoken both to the disciples and to the people. S. Jerome, Bede, N. de Lyra, S. Thomas, warn us that these words of Christ are not words of anger, but of reprehension merely.

*How long shall I be with you.*

S. Chrysostom, Euthymius, and Theophylact think, but erroneously, as may be supposed, that Christ intended by these words to show that He was possessed by the desire of dying, and of being thus delivered from the wickedness of the Jews. It would rather appear as if the words were those of one who desired the salvation of the Jews, and of

a Master who complained of the lives and the backwardness of His disciples : as He said to the Apostles (*S. John* xiv. 9).

Verse 17. *And Jesus rebuked him.*

The Greek is ἐπετίμησεν, which means that Christ commanded the unclean spirit, for the word means to rebuke, to command, and to threaten ; as the Greek author, Euthymius, with most careful attention to the exact meaning of the word, has observed, both on this passage and on chap. xvi. 22. The idea of commanding agrees better with the context than that of rebuking, as *S. Mark* explains, "I command thee" (ix. 24).

Verse 19. *Because of your unbelief.*

Christ first blamed the unbelief of the father of the youth and all the Jews publicly. He now blames that of the Apostles, but in private, that He may have consideration for their authority.

The unbelief with which He upbraids them does not appear to have been any actual refusal to believe, nor can we suppose that their faith was the least possible (for it must be supposed that they had great faith), but their faith appears to have been less than that which they ought to have had after having lived with Christ so long, and seen so many and great miracles. It is for this that Christ reprehends them. We may also believe, as *S. Chrysostom*, *Jerome*, *Bede*, *Strabus*, *Theophylact*, and *S. Thomas* say, that it was not only through their own want of faith, but also through that of the father of the youth, that they were unable to cast out the devil. This may be concluded from *S. Mark* ix. 22, where Christ said to the father, "If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth," as if He meant that it was, in a measure, the result of his unbelief that the Apostles were unable to cast out the devil.

*If you have faith.*

S. Chrysostom and Euthymius understand the faith of miracles, not that by which we are Christians ; as also do the heretics of our times. These fathers, however, are not to be classed with the former, because they speak with as good, as the others bad, intention. S. Chrysostom and Theophylact desired to lessen the fault of the disciples, that they might not appear not to have that faith by which we are Christians. It may be said further—

1. It is not doubtful that Christ, when He said this, did blame the Apostles, and accuse them of want of faith (S. *Mark* xvi. 14). He upbraided their unbelief. But no man can be blamed for not having the faith of miracles. For this is the gift of God, and in no degree depends upon the will of man, but solely upon that of God. For it is given, not to those who will it, like the faith by which we are Christians, but to those to whom God pleases to give it. It is sometimes given to those also who have not Christian faith, like prophecy, and gift of other miracles, as we have said before on chap. vii. 22. The Apostles, therefore, are no more to blame for not having the faith of miracles, granting that there is a distinct *fides miraculorum*, than for not having the gift of prophecy.

2. Christ blames the unbelief of the father of the youth in the same degree as that in which He blamed the Apostles. The unbelief of the father was opposed, not to the faith of miracles, but to faith in Christ, because he doubted of the divinity and power of Christ. The blame of the Apostles, therefore, was not for weakness of the faith of miracles, but of faith in Christ.

3. Christ spoke not only in blame, but also in exhortation, as He immediately added : “If you had faith as a grain of mustard seed,” &c. But no one exhorts another to have the gift of miracles, or prophecy, or tongues, because it is not in our own power to obtain these.

4. Lastly, it is clear that Christ speaks of the same faith as S. Paul (1 Cor. xiii. 2), who alludes to this passage. It is clear, from verse 13 of that chapter, that S. Paul speaks, not of the faith of miracles, but of faith in Christ, which is one of the three theological virtues.

*As a grain of mustard seed.*

All authors almost, ancient and modern alike, as Origen (*Tract. iv. on S. Matt.*), S. Jerome, Bede, Strabus, with S. Augustin, agree on this comparison that faith is not compared here with the grain of mustard seed in size, but in efficacy and sharpness, as if Christ had said: "If you have faith as ardent, vehement, and efficacious as a grain of mustard seed, you should say to this mountain, Remove from hence, hither, and it shall remove". This view, although approved by many of the highest authority, has its difficulties.

1. We do not compare hot and pungent, but small things, to mustard seed.

2. If this were the meaning, it would not have been necessary to compare faith to the grain of mustard seed, but to the seed itself, as the nature and effect, and not the smallness of the size alone, was the point of comparison. There is also an evident antithesis between a grain of mustard seed and a mountain. The one is the smallest, the other is the largest, of all objects. Christ meant that the least faith, like a grain of mustard seed, could move even the largest mountain. It is a question of the greatness and littleness, not of the efficacy, of faith.

A strong argument for this opinion may be derived from the mind and majesty of Christ. If He had intended to say: "If you had faith as ardent as a grain of mustard seed, you would say to this mountain," &c. It would have been true, but the meaning would have been poor and low, and not worthy of the greatness of His mind. For what



grace or acuteness is there in saying: "If you have burning faith you shall remove mountains". For we know that fire moves great weights. But that the least faith, that is, faith like the grain of mustard seed, should be able to move a vast mountain, shows grace from the antithesis, and acuteness from the unexpected declaration. This opinion of some of the Ancients, who, as S. Jerome says, thought thus, confirms the present view of the case. Hence the opinions of Origen and S. Jerome, Bede and Strabus, that it is not the least, but rather the greatest, faith that is here compared to the grain of mustard seed, and which S. Paul calls "all faith," that is, whole, entire, and perfect faith, appears contrary to the meaning of the passage. Against this, however, it may be said that S. Paul certainly alludes to this passage in 1 *Cor.* xiii. 2, and that he speaks not of the least, but of the greatest, faith. The same faith, I reply, is termed by Christ the least, and by S. Paul the greatest, in different senses; the least, by Christ, with regard to that which the Apostles, while with Christ, ought to have had. Christ does not mean that the Apostles had not even the least faith, for they assuredly had great faith when they confessed Him to be the Son of God; but, as one blaming them, He spoke in hyperbole and exaggeratedly, as if He had said: If you had the least faith, that is, as much as you ought to have, and not the greater, you would say to this mountain, "Remove from hence," and it shall remove. As we say to a person of good faculties, but who does not well understand what we say: "If you had the least sense you would understand". We do not mean that he is wholly devoid of all sense, but that he has too little to comprehend this particular subject.

In this sense Christ speaks of the least faith. But S. Paul, in comparison with that which either he himself or others commonly possessed, calls it the greatest—for no one had yet arrived at the point of removing mountains.

Hence, we may understand that it is not necessary that everyone who has the least faith, nor even that he who has the greatest, should remove mountains.

For we may believe that the Apostles had, if not then, at least afterwards, as great faith as Christ desired in them, so as to be able to move mountains, but we do not find that they ever did move them. What S. Chrysostom, Euthymius, and Theophylact, however, declare to be probable, is not to be denied, that they perhaps sometimes did so, but it is not anywhere related in Holy Scripture; for, as S. John says, all the miracles of Christ are not recorded. The same authors say, that if not Apostles, yet Apostolic men did this: alluding probably to the well-known history of S. Greg. Neocæs., who, according to Eusebius, when a church was being built, removed a mountain which stood in the way to another place (*Hist.*, vii. 13). The same authors tell us why the Apostles did not do the same. It was not necessary. For the Apostles, like Christ Himself, did not do all that they could have done, but only such things as were either desirable or necessary. The law of necessity is the glory of God; when this requires them, miracles are to be performed; when it does not, they are not to be looked for. S. Jerome, Bede (in his *Commentary*), and S. Augustin (*De Cons.*, i. 9) explain it allegorically: understanding human pride, which the Apostles removed and overcame, by the mountain.

*But this kind.*

S. Athanasius (*De Virginit.*), S. Chrysostom, Euthymius, S. Thomas (*Comment. in loc.*), think that not merely some one particular kind of evil spirit is here meant, but every kind, because they are all of the same nature, so that they cannot be cast out except by prayer and fasting. But the Apostles cast out many, not by these means, but by calling over them the name of Christ (*S. Luke* x. 17). Christ,

therefore, speaks of some particular kind of evil spirit, in the casting out of which there was more difficulty than in others, so that there was need of even prayer and fasting. What kind of evil spirit this was is wholly uncertain. S. Jerome (on this passage) and S. Leo (*Serm. ii. de Jejun. Mens. Sept.*) suppose it to have been some especially wicked kind of spirit. Others, that it was a spirit which had dwelt in the man a very long time, as if, like the cure of lasting and inveterate diseases, it were more difficult to drive out a spirit which had long had possession of a man than one which had entered him lately. These authorities think the reason of Christ's having asked how long it was since it had happened (*S. Mark ix. 20*).

The most obstinate and the fiercest kind of evil spirit may be supposed to be here intended; for Christ speaks of it as of some enemy who had possession, as it were, of the citadel, and who would be driven out with the greater difficulty as he was the more ferocious and obstinate, as in the parable (*S. Luke xi. 21*). This seems a conclusion from the result: for the evil spirit had made the youth lunatic, and deaf, and dumb, like some kinds of men who are sullen and silent, and give no reply to questions, and are deaf to prayers.

*But by prayer and fasting.*

It has been doubted whether he who drives out the devil should fast, or he from whom it is driven out. Some think that Christ intended the latter; others, as S. Chrysostom, Euthymius, and Theophylact, say that both should do so. Doubtless the prayers and fasts both avail, but Christ appears to speak here only of the exorcisor; for He was teaching the Apostles how to cast out this kind of devil.

Verse 21. *And when they abode together in Galilee.*

*Ἀναστρεφομένων.* The meaning of this is ambiguous. The word signifies either "living with" or "returning"; our

version rightly renders it "abode together," because Christ had now been living some time in Galilee, and the Evangelist had not mentioned his departure from it. He had come out of Phœnicia some time ago, as said by S. Matthew (xv. 21), and the constant opinion is that He was transfigured in Galilee before he went thence; for they afterwards came out to go into Judæa, and that Christ might raise Lazarus.

Verse 23. *They that received the didrachma came to Peter.*

S. Chrysostom, S. Jerome, Bede, Theophylact, and Euthymius think that, from the greatness of Christ's miracles, they did not venture for reverence to come to Him. This seems more likely than that, as some think, they came to Peter from malice, rather than to Christ, that they might elicit from him more easily whether Christ paid tribute to Cæsar or not, and, if He refused, that they might take occasion to accuse Him. Why they came to Peter rather than to any other of the disciples shall be explained on verse 27. The didrachma was a silver coin about equal to two Spanish reals, or equal to half a sicle, or fifteenpence English money.

There is a doubt as to what this tribute was. S. Hilary thinks that it was the tax which the Jews were ordered to pay yearly to the temple (*Exod.* xxx. 13); S. Chrysostom, Euthymius, and Theophylact think that it was the tribute which the Jews were commanded to give to the Lord (*Numb.* iii. 46, 47) for those first-born that exceeded the number of the Levites. This does not seem probable, for that tribute was only paid by two hundred and seventy-three persons, this being the number of the other tribes in excess of that of Levi.

The opinion of S. Jerome and Bede is more probable: that this was a tax which Augustus imposed upon the Jews, when he commanded the whole world to be enrolled

(*S. Luke* ii. 1). Their conjecture is reasonable, that Vespasian, when Jerusalem was taken by siege, imposed upon the Jews the same amount of tribute as they had before paid to the temple, as Josephus (*De Bell. Jud.*, vii. 26) asserts. It is probable that Vespasian re-imposed the same tribute as Augustus first laid upon them, in whatever part of the world they were, and from which they hoped to have freed themselves by their revolt. S. Hilary, perhaps, meant that Christ paid the tribute which the Jews paid to the temple, not as to Cæsar, but as to His Father.

Verse 24. *Yes.*

S. Peter replied affirmatively. We may suppose that he either did so from fear, lest, if he refused or should appear to doubt, he might offend the publicans, as if Christ were among the number of those who refused to give tribute to Cæsar, as He was afterwards accused of being: or that he had no doubt about Christ's intention: or that he knew that He had paid it in former years, which is much more likely. For when the publicans said, "Doth not your Master pay the didrachma?" the meaning was, "Is He not in the habit of doing so?" The word signifies, not an act, but a custom. There are many examples of this in Scripture, as in *S. John* iv. 9, which means that the Jews were not in the habit of communicating with the Samaritans. S. Peter, in confirmation of their opinion, answered, "Yes". The Evangelists mention this particular payment, perhaps, because of the miracle which was to follow.

*The kings of the earth.*

Christ's anticipation of Peter, and His foreknowledge of his thoughts, was in itself a great miracle. Christ may seem to have asked Peter that question inaptly, because He seems to indicate either that He was the Son of an earthly king—namely, Cæsar—if He thus desired to prove

that He did not owe tribute to Cæsar : or that it was paid, not to Cæsar, but to God, whose Son He was. The answer may be, as S. Chrysostom has observed, that the argument of Christ is one *a minore ad majus*, as if He had said, "If the sons of an earthly king owe no tribute, I, who am the Son of God, the King of kings, owe it to no king". He might allude to the origin of that tribute—that it should be paid to the temple, that is, to God. This is the opinion of S. Hilary and Theophylact. Some have raised the question whether Christ, as man, owed tribute? They answer that He did owe it, because S. Paul says that He was like us in all things, sin only excepted, and that He here affirms himself to be free from tribute, not as man, but as God. It may be objected—(1) that Christ seems to speak not only of Himself, but of Peter also ; and (2) that He spoke in the plural number—"the children,"—and added, "But that we may not scandalise them," &c. The first reason does not seem of much weight, because it is certain that Christ spoke of Himself as of the Son of God by nature, which S. Peter was not, and he therefore could not be included in the number of sons. But Christ spoke in the plural, because He included all the sons of kings in general. The second reason seems of more weight. Christ appears to desire to prove that neither He Himself nor His disciples owed tribute. He did not owe it Himself, because He was the Son of God, nor did His disciples, because they were of the number of His friends and companions. For not only the sons of kings, but also their attendants, are exempt from tribute.

The idea of some, that all Christians, as being the sons of God by adoption, or in some way the friends of Christ, are free from tribute, seems to be a question of no difficulty whatever. For although Christians are the sons of God by adoption, and bear the name of Christ, they are not of His household like the Apostles. And S. Paul (*Rom. xiii. 7*)

commands Christians to render to each his own—honour to whom honour, tribute to whom tribute. S. Augustin is also of this opinion (*Quest. Evang.*, i. 33). S. Jerome might have been brought forward in support of the above opinion with more appearance of reason. He says, on this passage : “ He bore the cross for us, and paid our tribute ; we, in His honour, pay no tribute, and, like the sons of a king, we are free from impost ”. But he either spoke allegorically, that we do not any longer pay tribute to the devil as before, or he alludes only to Ecclesiastics, who, under Christian emperors, were freed from all tribute.

Verse 26. *But that we may not scandalise them.*

The scandal of which the Doctors of the Church speak would have been not given but received ; but Christ, as He easily could do, wished to avoid even this. The glory of God required Him, as He could easily pay this tribute, not to offend the publicans, and give occasion for accusation to the malevolent Jews. For even when He had always paid the tribute, He was subsequently accused of forbidding to pay tribute to Cæsar (*S. Luke* xxiii. 2).

*And that fish which shall first come up.*

It is certain that a great and notable miracle was here performed, but S. Jerome doubts, with reason, in what it consisted ; whether in Christ’s knowledge of what the fish would be which would have the coin in its mouth ; or in His knowing that it would come up the first of all, or in His causing it to do so ; or that, in the fish which did come up first, He should have created the stater. The last idea seems the most probable, because fish, if they swallow a coin or any piece of money, do not hold it in their mouths, but in their bellies. The fish, therefore, if it had received that coin, would have had it not in its mouth, but in its belly. Some say, according to Theophylact, that the stater was not a coin, but a pearl, such as fish do contain. This

is not likely, however, because even pearls are found, not in the mouth, but in the belly ; nor are pearls found in fish that are taken in a net, but only in shell-fish, which divers separate from the rocks by their hands.

*A stater.*

A stater in Greek is the same as a sicle in Hebrew. It is a word of both Greek and Hebrew origin. It was equivalent to a tetradrachma, or two didrachmas. Christ ordered it to be given for Himself and for Peter, because each should pay a didrachma, that is, half a sicle.

*For Me and thee.*

Why for Peter rather than the other Apostles?

This has been matter of much perplexity. S. Chrysostom and Euthymius say that that tribute was only paid by the first-born, and Peter was such. But beside the fact that this opinion is refuted by the preceding verse, it may also be so by the more than great probability that others of the Apostles were the same. The above authors and S. Jerome give a better reason—that Christ paid for Himself and Peter, because Peter was the head of the Apostles. This does not meet the approbation of the heretics of our own time, but it is better than their assertion—that Christ paid for Peter because He lived in Peter's house. For it has been shown (viii. 14) that Peter had no house in Capernaum. Some think that Peter was at that time alone with Christ, as there is no mention of the other disciples, and that Christ paid for him because the publicans came to him only.

Another question has been raised by the ancient Fathers. Why, when He had His own purse, and when the devout women who had come with Him from Judæa supplied Him with all things needful, Christ paid the tribute, not from His own means, but from the fish?

The reason given by S. Jerome, that Christ would not



have the goods of the poor converted into tribute, finds favour with few. For the contents of the purse were devoted to things needful; and the payment of the tribute, when Christ willed it, was one of them. S. Chrysostom and Euthymius suppose that Christ desired to show that, although He paid tribute, He was still the Lord of the earth and the sea, because He took the tribute from the latter. The same authorities give another and apparently a better reason. That Christ would neither offend the publicans, nor part with His own right, and, therefore, paid the demand, not from His own purse, but from discovered money. Though the true reason may be that the other disciples who bore the purse were not present, and, as He would not offend the publicans, He performed a miracle to pay the tribute.

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## CHAPTER XVIII.

CHRIST TEACHES HUMILITY, TO BEWARE OF SCANDAL, AND TO FLEE THE OCCASIONS OF SIN—TO DENOUNCE TO THE CHURCH INCORRIGIBLE SINNERS, AND TO LOOK UPON SUCH AS REFUSE TO HEAR THE CHURCH AS HEATHENS—HE PROMISES TO HIS DISCIPLES THE POWER OF BINDING AND LOOSING, AND THAT HE WILL BE IN THE MIDST OF THEIR ASSEMBLIES—NO FORGIVENESS FOR THEM THAT WILL NOT FORGIVE.

Verse 1. *At that hour.*

“ABOUT that time,” *sub idem tempus*; a Hebraism. S. Mark (ix. 33) says that Christ anticipated the Apostles and asked what they disputed of in the way. They had disputed which of them should be the greatest. S. Luke (ix. 46) says that Jesus, knowing their thoughts, did not ask them, but took a child, and said: “Whosoever shall receive this child in My name receiveth Me, and whosoever receiveth Me receiveth Him that sent Me. For he that is the lesser among you all, he is the greater.” Of this kind of contention, S. Augustin, on the passage (*De Consens.*, ii. 61), is silent. S. Chrysostom and Euthymius say that the Apostles disputed, not once, but frequently, on the subject. (1) In the way; (2) In the house, when they saw Peter preferred to them in the payment of the tribute; (3) When Christ asked them what they disputed of in the way. (1) Then Christ asked the Apostles what they treated of; (2) Then the Apostles, seeing that their thoughts and contention were known to Christ, asked Him what they had not ventured to ask before—Which of them was the greatest?

It has been doubted on what occasion they asked this. S. Jerome, Bede, and Euthymius think that it was when they saw Christ pay the tribute for Himself and Peter. Others differ, because it appears from *S. Mark* ix. 33 that they had had their thoughts on the subject in the way before they came to Capernaum and the tribute had been paid; but we have said from S. Chrysostom and Euthymius that they had frequently and on different occasions discussed the question. The payment of the tribute, therefore, did not put the thought into their minds, but only strengthened that which was in them already. For there had been often occasions before. They had seen Peter, with two others, go up the mountain with Christ, and the keys of the kingdom of heaven given to him (xvi. 19), as again S. Chrysostom and Euthymius say. Others give another and not unacceptable reason—that they had heard Christ often speak of His death as being now very near at hand, and wondered which of them would be, so to speak, His heir—that is, His vicar after His death. This is very agreeable to human nature and custom, when men stand around those who are at the point of death, with thoughts of their succession. The Apostles seem to have done this on the eve of Christ's Passion (*S. Luke* xxii. 24).

*Who thinkest thou.*

The comparative is put for the superlative, and the present for the future, by a Greek idiom, as if it were written, Which of us is to be the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?

*In the kingdom of heaven.*

Some, as SS. Chrysostom and Epiphanius, take these words to mean the kingdom of heaven itself, and the celestial glory, which from verse 3 seems probable. It is credible that Christ answered the Apostles about the same kingdom of heaven as they spoke of.

But it is more likely that in this instance the Church is termed the kingdom of heaven—(1) From the cause of their asking the question when they saw Peter in every respect preferred, and they thought that he would be the head of all the Church; (2) From their having been blamed by Christ when He rebuked their ambition. To wish to be the first in the kingdom of heaven is love, not ambition; but to wish to be first in the Church, and to be placed over others, was to incur blame as being ambitious. This may be proved from verse 3, where the contrary opinion is approved. For Christ would say that he who is least in the present kingdom of heaven—that is, the Church—should be accounted greatest, and should, therefore, be the greatest in heaven. So speaks S. Luke of the present kingdom of the Church (ix. 48). Christ therefore plays on the ambiguity of the words, when He says, “Except ye be converted,” as we have observed that He has often done before.

*Verse 2. And Jesus calling to Him a little child.*

Some think that it was an infant, because S. Mark says that Christ took him up in His arms (S. Mark ix. 35; x. 16). But they are in error. For a child larger than an infant may be small enough to be taken up in arms, and this child was able to walk. Christ then called, not an infant, but a child, and an innocent one, and placed him in the midst, that, as has been observed by S. Chrysostom, he might teach humility, not in words, but by actual facts.

*Verse 3. Unless you be converted.*

It has been erroneously inferred from these words that the Apostles were then in a state of mortal sin, because Christ said “except,” as if they were not able to enter the kingdom of heaven at that time. Christ meant simply that they could not enter it themselves unless they were like children in simplicity and humility. This is not to be

understood as if a humility and simplicity equal to that of children were required in all men. For if so, who would ever enter the kingdom of heaven? But the greatest example of humility is put forward, not that we may wholly come up to it, but that we may approach as near to it as we possibly can. So we are commanded to be perfect as our Father in heaven is perfect (chap. v. 48). Nor is it intended that the Apostles had not such humility as would enable them to enter the kingdom of heaven; but they have what is required shown to them, that if they have it not, they may gain it, and if they have it, they may keep it. The expression, "unless you become," &c., does not mean that they were not such then. It alludes to their age, that as they are fully grown now, they should become as little children, as Christ said to Nicodemus (*S. John* iii. 3).

But Christ blamed the ambition of the Apostles. Granted. It does not follow, however, that it was such as to be a mortal sin, or to hinder them from entering the kingdom of heaven; for it might be venial, and it is right that we should believe it to have been such. The Apostles, therefore, are to be excused by this or some other better reason, as S. Chrysostom excuses them, not blamed. Christ commands us to be like children, not in all things, but in simplicity, in humility, and in innocence, as S. Paul (1 *Cor.* xiv. 20), as say S. Clement of Alexandria (*Pædag.*, i. 5), S. Ambrose (*Serm.* x.).

Verse 5. *And he that shall receive one such little child.*

The reason of Christ's saying this may easily be gathered from what has gone before and from what follows. He would prove that he is the greatest who most resembles the least, because a child is most like Himself and bears His Person. He proves this by the fact that whoever receives a child receives Him. But to receive does not only mean,

as some think, to receive Him into our houses, but to follow this up by every kind of well-doing in our power: in a word, to do good, as He will say in the judgment (xxv. 40). S. Mark and S. Luke relate only this part of Christ's conversation, omitting what S. Matthew has added. Probably because in this lay the sum of the whole matter.

Verse 6. *But he that shall scandalise.*

The argument, as S. Chrysostom and Theophylact have observed, is a *contrario*. To scandalise does not mean here, as elsewhere, to set a bad example, but to injure another, as Chrysostom, Euthymius, and S. Thomas have pointed out. This is also clear from the antithesis, for receiving little children is opposed to injuring them. To receive is to benefit. To scandalise, therefore, is to do the contrary (*beneficere, maleficere*). By little ones here is meant not merely those who are of tender age, like this little child, but those who are so in their lives. For Christ adds, "who believe in Me". For these are they to whom injustice is most commonly done under the idea that they are simple or of low degree.

*A mill-stone.*

Many think that the lower mill-stone was called the *mola asinaria*, or in Greek *ὄνος*, that is "asinus," the ass, and that it was larger than the upper one. But Christ clearly meant a huge stone merely. The common opinion is not satisfactory, for Christ used the Syriac language, in which this ambiguity is not found. S. Hilary (*Can.* xviii.) and S. Ambrose (*Serm.* xviii.) seem correct—that it was called *mola asinaria*, because an ass was much used in grinding. It was called *mola asinaria* to distinguish it from *mola trusatilis*, or hand-mill. Christ named the former because it is much larger than the latter. The burial of an ass was a common Jewish custom for criminals. Christ, perhaps, alluded to pride, against which He was speaking (as in xi.

23). S. Augustin thinks, allegorically, that the *mola asina* is intended to show the weight of men's sins.

Verse 7. *Woe to the world because of sin.*

By "the world" some understand the authors of sin ; as if Christ lamented their condition. But it is not those who suffer, but they who commit the offence, that are miserable. The opinion of S. Hilary, S. Chrysostom, Euthymius, and Theophylact seems better—that they are called the world who are in the world, whom Christ had called the little ones just before, and of whom He had said, "whoever shall offend," &c. For as He had spoken of their offence done to them, He adds that many other scandals threaten them. I cannot agree with S. Chrysostom, Euthymius, and Theophylact in saying that Christ said this in blame of those who should be offended, as a little before He had blamed those who should offend them. It is sin not only to offend, but also to be offended, as this is a mark of infirmity. For though to be offended is sometimes a sin, as when the Pharisees were offended at the miracles of Christ, yet their view is not apt ; for it has been shown on the preceding verse that to offend in this passage does not mean to cause scandal, but to do a wrong. But to suffer injury is not a fault, but a great virtue. Christ, therefore, said not as blaming but as pitying : "Woe to the world," *Væ mundo*.

He says it must needs be—not as of absolute necessity, but as from human perversity, as S. Chrysostom, S. Jerome, Bede, and Euthymius observe, that offences would come : not because Christ foretold them, but that He foretold them because they would come. It will, perhaps, be objected that the particles, "but," "nevertheless" (*verumtamen*), show the meaning to be that, however necessary it be that offences should come, he who causes them will not, therefore, be held free from blame. The answer again may be that this is not the actual meaning, but one closely resembling it.

Although offences might have come otherwise, he who caused them will not on that account be blameless. Saul was to die, but he who put him to death was not on that account blameless.

*But nevertheless, woe to that man.*

Many of the Ancients were of opinion that Judas is here meant, as Philastrius against those who justified his treachery—S. Jerome and Bede in their commentary on this passage, and S. Ambrose, or, as I think, Remigius, in his *Commentary on xi. 1 of 1 Corinthians*—but the application is evidently general.

Verse 8. *And if thy hand.*

This shows how careful men should be to avoid offences. The hand is to be cut off; the eye plucked out. On this see verses 29, 30.

Verse 10. *Their angels.*

Christ shows that the little ones are not to be offended or despised, because they are so dear in the sight of God that they have their angels in His presence, by whom they are guarded. From this and other passages has arisen the common opinion of guardian angels.

1. It appears from Scripture that every kingdom and province, even of unbelievers, has each its guardian angel set over it (*Dan. x. 13-20*). This all ancient writers, and most especially Clement of Rome (*Recog.*, ii.), Clement of Alexandria (*Strom.*, vi.), S. Chrysostom (*Hom. lxi. on S. Matt.*), and Theodoret (*Orat. x. on Daniel*), conclude from *Deut. xxxii. 8*, following the LXX., who, for “sons of Israel,” read “the angels of God”; as if the meaning were that to every province and people one angel was given as a protector. It appears also from the *Apocalypse* (ii. 8, 12, 18; iii. 1, 7, 14) that to each church an angel is given, by whom it is ruled; according to S. Hilary (*On Ps. cxxiv.*), S. Gregory



Nazianzen (*Orat. Episc.*), S. Jerome (chap. i., *Ecclesiast.*), and the author of the *Commentary on the Epistle to the Corinthians*, wrongly ascribed to S. Jerome (*Ep. i. 11*). This has always been believed, not only from universal tradition, but also from the more than probable testimony of the Holy Scripture, that every single Christian has his own peculiar angel, to whose care he is committed ; for Christ speaks here of it as a known fact ; and as it is certain that every man has his angel, He places those of the little ones, that is, of the just, before the rest.

We conclude the same thing from *Genesis* xlviii. 16 and *Acts* xii. 15, when Peter was delivered from prison by his own angel ; and when he had knocked at the door in the night they said, "It is not Peter but his angel". So far all ancient authors agree (S. Justin, *Quæst.* 30 ; Lactantius, ii. 15 ; S. Basil, *On Ps. xxxvii.-lviii.*, *De Spiritu Sancto*, lib. iii. ; S. Chrysostom, *hoc loc.* ; S. Jerome, *On Isaiah* lxvi. ; Theodoret, *De Div. decret.*, lib. v., *Orat. x. on Daniel* ; Isidore, lib. xii., *De Summ. Bon.* ; Origen, *passim*). Some teachers, neither of bad repute nor mere moderns, have gone further and thought that Christ Himself had an angel, of which S. Luke speaks (xxii. 43) ; but this is a paradox hardly worthy of Christ the true God. He had, indeed, angels which ministered to Him, but not who preserved Him. The followers of Calvin, indeed, say that all angels are the guardians of all men, as in *Heb. i. 14*. Of one point at least there has been raised a partial doubt—whether angels are given to all men, even to those who are not Christians. Origen (*Tract. vi. on S. Matt.*) and The Author (*Hom. v.*) seem to think that they are only given to the baptised ; but the opinion of all other authorities is to the contrary effect ; and the former is refuted both from Scripture and reason. For, if an angel was set over Greece and the kingdom of Persia, we may believe that Persians and Greeks had each his own angel ; for God regards men

more than kingdoms, and He seeks the salvation of all men, in securing which He uses the ministry of angels.

It is less certain whether every man has not only a good angel on the one hand to defend him, but also an evil one on the other which assails him. But this also is proved both from the earliest tradition, not only of Christians, but also of Jews; and ancient writers produce in its favour the example of Barnabas, which was formerly of great weight in the Church, as Origen, Cassian, Bede (*On Acts* xii.), and others show. S. Gregory of Nyssa (in his *Life of Moses*), The Author (*Hom. v. on S. Matt.*), and others confirm this opinion. There is some trace of it also in Scripture; for S. Paul speaks of an angel of Satan sent to buffet him (2 *Cor.* xii. 7). However this may be understood, it is at least credible that the devil, the prince of evil spirits, imitates God in the administration of his kingdom; and as God has given to each man his own particular good angel to have charge of him, so he would give evil ones in opposition; for Christ seems when He says, "Their angels in heaven always see the face of My Father, which is in heaven," to attribute something singular to the angels of these little ones, as if the others were inferior, and these saw the face of God which the others did not. Origen (*Hom. xxxv. on S. Luke*) confirms his error from this passage, as if even the good angels through their negligence in protecting men sometimes lose their beatitude; as if the meaning were that the angels of other men sometimes see the face of God and sometimes do not, because they sometimes guard men well and sometimes ill, but that the angels of the little ones always see it, because they keep them always well. But as the little ones are kept by their angels more carefully than other men, they are not to be offended or despised.

S. Chrysostom thinks that a singular privilege was given to the angels of the little ones, and that as not all angels,

but only those of the highest order, were allowed to see the face of God, it is signified here that the care of the little ones was committed to the highest angels. There certainly appears to be some difference between the angels of the little ones and those of other men, but not what either Origen or S. Chrysostom think ; but the angels of the little ones are greater than of other men. Should anyone wonder at this, he must remember that not boys, but just men, are here called the little ones, and the Scripture testifies that God has more care for these than for other men. For that the angels of the little ones are greater and more honourable than those of other men is proved from the fact that they always see the face of God,—not as if the other angels did not, but that by that expression the Hebrews meant one who was near to, and, as it were, a familiar friend of God. It is a metaphor taken from the palace, where the more honourable a man is, the nearer he is placed to the king, and the more continually he is in his sight. So the Queen of Sheba said of the servants of Solomon : “Blessed are thy men, and blessed are thy servants who stand before thee always and hear thy wisdom” (3 *Kings* x. 8 ; S. Gregory, ii., *Moral.*, ch. iii.). S. Bernard (*De ded. Eccl.*, *Serm.* v.) says that we may conclude from this passage, what, indeed, all subsequent divines have thought, that the angels, wherever they go, always bear with them their beatitudes, that is, they always behold the face of God. Christ metaphorically calls the splendour of the Divine Essence the face of God, as the face, or rather the countenance, of a man is that part in which his whole person shines forth.

Verse 11. *For the Son of man is come to save that which was lost.*

This is the second proof of Christ's that the little ones are not to be despised, since the Son of man came for their

salvation. We find a like argument in S. Paul (1 *Cor.* viii. 11). But Christ speaks according to the opinion of men, who think those who are most especially just, because they see them downcast and humble, to be sinners above all men, as the Pharisees said to the blind man whom Christ healed (*S. John* ix. 34): "Thou wast wholly born in sins". When Christ says this, He does not show that other men have not perished, but only that He came for sinners, so that if any man were not a sinner, He would not have come for him.

Verse 12. *If a man have an hundred sheep.*

This is the third proof, from the simile of a shepherd, which Christ gives that, as a Good Shepherd, He counts of more value the salvation of the little ones—that is, those who are accounted sinners, than that of other men. It is not meant that there are any men who have not sinned, but that for those alone who have sinned Christ came. There has been much question as to who the ninety-nine are who have not sinned. The most ancient authors say that they are the good angels. For the sheep are all the rational creatures of God, of whom some—that is, men—have gone astray (*S. Irenæus*, iii. 21, 39; *Origen*, ii., *In Gen.*, and vii., *On Joshua*; *S. Cyril Jerusalem*, *Cat. Lect.*, xv.; *S. Hilary*, *in hoc loc.*; *S. Ambrose*, *Apol. David.*, chap. v.; *S. Gregory*, *Hom.* xxxiv. *in Evang.*; and *Theophylact*). *S. Jerome* (*in hoc loc.*) mentions this opinion, and *S. Athanasius* (q. 2). But it cannot be doubted that Christ speaks only of men—unless we say most senselessly with *Origen* that He came for the angels who have sinned. The meaning then is, not that He left ninety-nine sheep which had not gone astray to seek the only one which had, but He made the salvation of even one man of so great account that if there had been only a hundred men, and one of them only had sinned, He,

like a good shepherd, would have left the ninety-nine and sought the one. It is a great proof of His love to us, and refutation of their opinion who say that even if men had not sinned Christ would have come. Therefore (verse 14) Christ does not conclude with saying that He had left the ninety-nine which had not strayed to seek the one which had, but He said, "It is not the will".

Verse 14. *Even so, it is not the will.*

That is, as that shepherd does not suffer even the least sheep of his flock to perish, but loves the safety of the one that goes astray more than that of those who have not done so, so it is not the will of His Father in heaven that even the least of them should perish. The same thing is taught in the parable of the lost son (*S. Luke* xv. 24, &c.).

The words (*S. Matt.* xviii. 14) *ante patrem vestrum* are a Hebraism taken from the edicts of kings which are said to proceed from his sight that they may be sure of being held good. Christ spoke of the divine will as of a decree. He said *patrem vestrem*, and not *meum*, probably to harmonise with the subject of His words. This was the love and mercy of God for men, both of which are the property of the Father.

Verse 15. *But if thy brother shall offend against thee.*

Christ calls all Christians generally our brothers, for He only speaks of these, as is seen by His own words.

He opposes a heathen and publican to brother (verse 17), and the Church does not judge those who are without (*1 Cor.* v. 12). Christ now properly calls the one whom He had termed a little one (verse 10) a brother; and teaches that if he has done any wrong, he is not to be treated severely and as an enemy, but with mercy and like a brother, as the Son of man treats him, who came to save that which was lost.

*Against thee.*

It may be rightly asked what kind of sins are here meant, for some appear to be of such a nature as not to allow one who commits them to be corrected privately. Origen (*Tract. vi. on S. Matt.*) explains it only of venial sins, whether against God or ourselves. S. Hilary, S. Chrysostom, S. Jerome, S. Ambrose (*On S. Luke xvii.*), S. Augustin (*Serm. xvi. de verb. Dom. sec. Matt.*), Theophylact, and Euthymius take it of mortal sins, but of such as are committed only against ourselves, and not against God, for these are not to be dissembled. They would appear to be every kind of sin, whether against ourselves or against God. We must keep in view the design of Christ, that we should not accuse a sinner with bitterness, but correct him with gentleness. He said, "If he sin against thee," because we are apt to be bitter, and sharp, and hard on those who have sinned against us when we rebuke them; and Christ desired, most wisely, when the danger was greatest, to impose upon us some restraints against violence. Yet from one kind of sin we may understand every kind, unless there be any obstacle to brotherly correction.

We may doubt why Christ did not say, "If thy brother sin against thee, forgive him" (as chap. v. 23, 24; vi. 14). The answer may be that in the words, "Rebuke him between thee and him alone," a tacit refusal is concealed. As if Christ had said: If thy brother sin against thee, do not accuse him at once before the Church, but first correct his fault. Whether or not everyone who is sinned against, or who knows of the sin of another, and in every kind of sin ought to correct the offender, must be decided by the rule of the Doctors of the Church, which is formed on the words of Christ: "If he hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother". When, then, there is hope of spiritual gain, the brother is to be corrected. When there is none, he is either to be

accused before the Church if profit can be hoped, or otherwise to be left to God.

Verse 16. *Take with thee one or two.*

It seems uncertain why, after the first admonition, this is necessary. Some say that it was that the rebuke might be more severe, and that the offender might be ashamed from the presence of the witnesses. Others, that it is to show by the presence of the witnesses that the accuser had done his duty; as Euthymius and others. Some again, that if the offender did not correct himself, the complainant might have witnesses to accuse him before the Church. This is the opinion of many moderns. Others, that the corrector may more easily persuade the other when he does not stand alone, but there are two or three to support him, as S. Chrysostom, S. Augustin (*Serm. xvi. de verb. Dom.*), and Theophylact hold. This is the more probable, because Christ says (from *Deuteronomy* xvii. 6), "In the mouth of two or three witnesses," &c. There is, however, this difference. In *Deuteronomy* God wished to terrify men from the commission of crimes, but here Christ means that two or three witnesses are sufficient to prove the truth. Whether the witnesses are to be called in succession one after another or all at once has been matter of doubt, and the point is not settled. S. Jerome thinks that first one should be called, and then the second, and then the third. But from the result, and from the words of *Deuteronomy*, which are cited by Christ, it is clear that they are not to be called separately but all at once, and two or three in number at least. For it is not in the mouth of one but of two or three witnesses that every word shall stand.

Verse 17. *And if he will not hear them, tell the Church.*

If he will not believe them, that is, then it shall be lawful for thee to bring thy brother to the judgment of the Church.

The word "hear" is here put for "obey" by a Hebraism. Some heretics, without reason, understand by the Church the Jewish synagogue. For nowhere in the New Testament is the synagogue called the Church, as S. Augustin (*Ep. to Rom.* and *Ps.* lxxxix.) first remarked, and on the verse following, speaking of the Church before which the offender was to be brought, He adds "Whatever you bind," &c. The power of binding and loosing was given not to the Jewish synagogue but to the Christian Church; and as Christ said this not to the Jews but to the Apostles, we cannot doubt that it was spoken of the Church and not of the synagogue.

It is clear, however, from this that the Church is a visible thing, and not, as these would have it, invisible, or rather a mere nullity. These men dread the judgment of the Church, and therefore would not have it to be a visible thing.

*Let him be to thee as the heathen and publican.*

Christ alludes to the custom of the Jews, who abstained from the society of ethnics and publicans, esteeming them as public sinners. The meaning, therefore, is that they who will not obey the judgment of the Church are to be avoided as if they were heathens. Christ orders this to be done for two reasons :

1. That such men, when they see themselves separated from the Church, may repent, as says S. Paul (1 *Cor.* v. 5), that their souls may be saved.

2. Lest they who are in good plight should incur the risk of contagion by consorting with them, as above (1 *Cor.* v. 11; *Titus* iii. 10, 11; 2 *John* 10, 11).

Verse 18. *Whatsoever you shall bind.*

Origen, Theophylact, Anastasius (*Quæst.* 2 in *Scrip.*), and, perhaps, S. Chrysostom (but he speaks with obscurity), think that these words were addressed to all Christians—



deceived, as appears, by the context and order of words ; for Christ said before (verses 15-18), " If thy brother shall offend against thee," and then, " Whatsoever you shall bind upon earth ". They think that these words apply only to those against whom the sin was committed ; as if the meaning were : If you forgive the wrong, God will forgive it also—if you do not forgive it, God will not forgive it.

It is clear that Christ distinguished him against whom the wrong is done—the witnesses—from the Church, and says to the latter alone, " Whatsoever you bind ". It is clear that the Church is distinguished from him who has brought the sinner forward, and that the meaning is : If he does not obey the Church which binds him, let him be to thee whom he has wronged as a heathen and a publican ; for he who receives the wrong is one, and he who binds and looses is another. It is a more weighty question whether the subject is only the external and, so to speak, political power of the Church, as some have thought. There is no doubt that it is both the external and internal power of the keys of which Christ speaks when He says, " Whatsoever you shall bind upon earth shall be bound also in heaven," that is, *apud Deum* ; for whatever is bound and loosed, *apud Deum*, is bound and loosed, not only extrinsically and in the opinion of men, but also intrinsically and in truth.

Christ willed the Church to be the final tribunal before which sinners, when there were no other means of cure, should be brought ; and he, therefore, gave it the highest power possible. But He would not have given this supreme power if He had not given it a greater than every state has by its own right, that of sending malefactors into banishment, which is, to excommunicate them in the Church.

It may be objected from this passage, either that it only treats of the external power of excommunication and not of the power of absolution in the Sacrament of Penance, or, if this is treated of at all, it follows that no one who is not

a priest can excommunicate, which is contrary to the use of the Church. The answer is, that Christ properly treats of the Sacrament of Penance, and that the power of excommunication is part of that power, through the Sacrament of Penance, of binding and loosing ; for whoever does not absolve a penitent after he has heard his confession privately, in a manner excommunicates him, because he deprives him of sharing in the sacraments, although, because the excommunication is secret, it is not called excommunication ; but they who, when not priests, excommunicate, do it *in alia* (another) *ratione*, that is, as being superiors, and having ecclesiastical jurisdiction, they deprive a public sinner of participating in the sacraments and the prayers of the Church. This is, therefore, commonly called excommunication.

Verse 19. *Again I say unto you.*

These words do not seem at first sight to agree well with the preceding ones. S. Hilary, S. Chrysostom, S. Jerome, Euthymius, and Theophylact think that they mean that Christ the more commends the concord of which He began to speak when He said, " If thy brother shall offend against thee, go and rebuke him between thee and him alone," meaning that it was of so much value that if two men agreed together to ask for a thing God would give it to them. Then Christ perhaps argues *a minore ad majus*—If two men gained from God whatever they asked, how much more shall the judgment of the Church be confirmed ? as S. Gregory (*Ep.* cx.) seems to imply. And this is the meaning of the words, " Again I say unto you," as if Christ had said, " Not only whatever you shall bind upon earth shall be bound also in heaven, but also, what is more, I also promise you that whatever two of you ask by common consent, you shall obtain it ".

It will be said that the subject was not of prayer, but of

the power of binding and loosing ; to what end, then, was the addition, "If two of you"? It was to show that God would never suffer them to err in their judgments, that is, in binding and loosing, if they acted in His name, because whatsoever they asked the Father in His name should be done (*S. John* xiv. 13 ; xvi. 23). Some think that Christ added this about prayer because He knew that the Apostles and whoever had the power of binding and loosing would never use it without prayer beforehand, in which they would beg of God the grace of rightly and justly judging. This seems reasonable.

*If two of you.*

These words have been differently explained. Origen (*Tract.* vi. *in S. Matt.*) refers them to husband and wife, who, as S. Paul (1 *Cor.* vii. 5) says, if they abstain from conjugal custom for the sake of prayer shall obtain what they ask. Others refer them to the soul and body, as Origen (*eod. loc.*), S. Athanasius (*Quæst.* 61), S. Ambrose (*Instit. Virg.*, chap. ii., and *On S. Luke* xiv.), S. Jerome Bede, and Theophylact in his commentaries. Others refer them only to the Apostles, as S. Chrysostom and Euthymius. Others, as Anastasius (*Quæst.* 74), to him who is blamed and to him who blames. Others to all Christians, because it follows, "Where there are two or three gathered together in My name there am I in the midst of them" (verse 20), for the promise seems to be general.

*On earth.*

Earth is here opposed by Christ to heaven, to signify that those who are on earth, though it be so far distant from heaven, will be heard there when they pray, as explained on chap. xvi. 29.

*Concerning any thing whatsoever.*

Though Christ spoke generally and universally, His words are not so to be understood as that we should think we

shall obtain whatever we ask, whether good or evil, honourable or dishonourable. For Christ takes it as certain that good men, as by some law of nature, will ask only what is good. His words, "any thing whatsoever," are meant to include not only good and evil, but also small and great, easy and difficult things. Why we do not always gain what we ask, and under what conditions these promises are to be understood, has been stated (vii. 7).

Verse 20. *Where there are two or three gathered together in My name.*

This is a confirmation of the former verse, and it gives the reason why whatever two consent together to ask they shall obtain. It is because He is in the midst of them, and speaks, as it were, out of their own mouths for them; or, as in verse 18, that whatever they bind and loose shall be bound and loosed, because He is in the midst of them binding or loosing for them. The idea of S. Hilary, S. Chrysostom, and Theophylact, that the being gathered together means merely consent about a thing or union as friends for Christ's sake, is forced. For when Christ says, "I am in the midst of them," He clearly means an assembly and session in which He sits in the midst as a judge. He alludes, perhaps, to the custom of the Jews, who exercise judgment in their assemblies, that is, their synagogues.

It is more difficult to explain the assembling in Christ's name. Some, like S. Chrysostom and Euthymius, take it to mean a meeting on account of Christ; that is, that they who are met together seek for nothing else but only the glory of Christ. Others say that it means the invoking of the name of Christ, and this the rather because He was speaking of prayer. The meaning seems to be that we should come together by His authority, and bearing His Person, as S. Paul says (1 Cor. v. 4), that he, in the name (that is, the authority and power of Christ, as he imme-

diately declares) delivered over that Corinthian to Satan, and as we read that the Apostles in the name of Christ baptised and wrought miracles. When, therefore, they who possess the power in the Church of judging come together for judgment, they are therefore said to come together in Christ's name. Nor is it necessary that they should seek nothing else than Christ, for how many have ever done this? Besides, it can never appear whether they are assembled in the name of Christ or not. For who but God knows the wills of men?

When the heretics say that we must judge whether the assemblies come together in the name of Christ, by whether they decree nothing except from the Word of God, they speak perversely. For it is not because they decree nothing contrary to the Word of God that they come together in the name of Christ, but because they come together in the name of Christ they cannot decree anything except from the Word of God. For they come together in the name of Christ before they decree anything; and they who do not come together in that name can sometimes decree a thing *ex verbo Dei*. They therefore give us an uncertain heresy and a fallacious rule; which, if it were true, could never decide for us whether or not any council had ever met in the name of Christ. For it would require another council to decide whether anything had been ruled not *ex verbo Dei*; and to decide whether this Latin council had said anything beside the Word of God, there would be need of another, and so our faith would nowhere find a place for its foot.

*There am I in the midst of them.*

Origen, S. Chrysostom, and Euthymius observe that Christ did not say, "there I shall be," but, "there I am". This is hardly certain perhaps. They should rather have explained what Christ's being in the midst of them is. S. Hilary speaks as if it meant simply His dwelling in them

by grace. But in this way He is in all just men, even if not assembled together. But Christ's words mean that He is in the midst of those who are assembled together in another manner than in those who are not so. Some explain "I am *in medio eorum*—in the midst of them," by, "I am there to ask for them, to pray for them". The words would appear to mean not only assistance, but also authority, as if Christ had said: I sit in their midst as a supreme judge, confirming their decisions which they pronounce in My name, as David says in *Ps. lxxx. 1*.

This passage is brought forward to prove the authority of councils, which not only heretics, but some Catholics, say it cannot do, because it treats of prayer and not of judgment; and of the assembling of two or three, not of a just council.

These do not appear to see the force of the argument: that it is one *a minore ad majus*. For if, when two or three judges of the Church come together in the name of Christ to judge of some matter not of very great consequence, Christ declares that He is in the midst of them, how will He not be so when not two or three, but all the judges of the Church—that is, the bishops—come together to judge, not some small matter, but the faith, the religion, the salvation of men, the government of the whole Church?

It will be objected that by this same passage the authority of Provincial Councils, as they are called, will also be established. For in these also, not two or three, but many, bishops are assembled. It may be granted that it is so; only Provincial Councils must be assembled in Christ's name. They are so assembled when they meet in His authority, and they meet in His authority when they are assembled and confirmed by the authority of the Roman Pontiff, His Vicar; without which, as they cannot be assembled at all, nor can meet in the name of Christ,

we do not deny that when they do not meet in the name of Christ, they can err.

Verse 21. *Then came Peter.*

It is not very clear what moved Peter to ask this question. S. Jerome thinks that it was the words of Christ (verse 15); for Peter may have honestly doubted how often he ought to forgive a brother who had offended him; but Christ had spoken, not of the forgiveness of wrongs but of brotherly correction. S. Chrysostom and Euthymius think that Peter was prompted by love of honour and the desire of gaining praise for mercy, and that he supposed himself to be the author of a great saying when he proposed forgiveness seven times. It would appear that he was urged to ask the question by the words of Christ (*S. Luke* xvii. 4). For although S. Matthew has passed over these words in silence, it seems probable that Christ spoke them when He said, "If thy brother shall offend against thee," for S. Luke unites these words with them; though S. Augustin thinks that they were spoken at some other time and on some other occasion (*De Consens.*, ii. 61); but it appears more reasonable to suppose that the Evangelist wrote at one time and in one order what Christ spoke in another.

"Till seven times:" what Christ said without limit, Peter understood definitely, for Christ had signified that the brother should be forgiven seven times; that, is as often as he had offended. For seven is put very commonly for an infinite and unlimited number (as in *Prov.* xxiv. 16); that is, as often as he falls he shall rise again, because the Lord will not desert him.

Verse 22. *I say not unto thee, &c.*

An infinite number multiplied ten times and multiplied by the same again makes the result still more infinite,

although, in fact, seven times and seventy times seven amounts to the same result, as each amount signifies the negation of number ; as if Christ had said, I say unto thee not only that thou shalt forgive an innumerable number of times, but an innumerably innumerable number. So say S. Chrysostom and Euthymius, and so *Genesis* iv. 24 ; to which passage S. Hilary thinks Christ here made allusion, meaning that as punishment, so pardon should be extended indefinitely ; because "where sin abounded, grace did more abound" (*Rom.* v. 20). This, as S. Jerome and Bede have observed, is to be understood of the brother who sins against us seventy times seven in the same day. This is plain from S. Luke.

The priest is not taught by this to give absolution heedlessly to those who sin frequently, but he is taught, when sinned against, to be always ready to receive the sinner to forgiveness. It seems to be difficult how Christ, in *S. Luke*, said, "If he be converted unto thee, forgive him," as if the meaning were that he ought not to remit the offender unless he be first penitent ; to do which would be entirely contrary to all Scripture, for it is the most certain rule : "Forgive us our debts as we also forgive our debtors ; but if you will not forgive men, neither will your Father forgive you your offences" (vi. 12-15). In two ways, then, we forgive an offence : (1) Either by bearing to the offender no ill-will (and this we should always do), even if he do not repent, that God may forgive us our trespasses ; or (2) by not accusing him. For not to accuse, not to delate, and not to punish, is to spare. In this way we are to understand that Christ would not have us forgive our brother who has offended us, unless he first repent. His object was to teach that a brother is not to be brought before the Church unless he have first been privately admonished before two or three witnesses and still remain obstinate in his wickedness.



Verse 23. *Therefore* ("Ideo").

We should rather have expected *quid* than *ideo*, but either *διὰ* or *τοῦ* is put for *ὅτι*, that is, *propterea* for *quia*, as sometimes the Hebrews put לְכֹ *"for,"* or we must understand that this was said because the kingdom of heaven is like a king, that is, a certain king—a Hebraism which has been found in many places. To say that the kingdom of heaven is like a king is the same as saying that the same thing takes place in the kingdom of heaven as if a king were beginning to take account of his servants (as xi. 16); for it is not the kingdom of heaven, that is, the Church, but the Lord of the kingdom that is compared to the king.

The meaning of the whole parable is to be gathered from verse 35, namely, that God will not forgive us our sins unless we forgive the sins of our brother, as it is more right that we should forgive him than that God should forgive us; for we men are like our brothers, but God is unlike us. Our sins against God are without number, and infinitely heavy; the sins of our brother against us are both few and for the most part light. There are in this parable as in all the others, as has been said before, some things necessary and properly parts of it; others which are emblems, embellishments, and additions to complete the whole. The necessary parts are the king and the two servants: the one whose debt the lord forgave, the other whose debt his fellow-servant would not forgive. Then there is the debt of the ten thousand talents which one servant owed the king, and that of the hundred pieces which the fellow-servant owed the other. The emblems are (1) that in verse 25 the king is said to have commanded the wife and children of the debtor to be sold for the ten thousand talents; for this is not to be applied to the subject as if it signified that the wife would be condemned because of her husband and the children because of their father; for these

are either ornaments or they mean that the most heavy punishment is signified, such as that which, according to civil law, was inflicted not only on him who had committed the crime, but also on his wife and children, and which is found in 4 *Kings* iv. 1.

(2) It is also an emblem, as is shown in verse 31 ; for it is not meant that the saints, that is, the servants of God, accuse those who do not forgive their brothers' trespasses, but it is said because it is often the custom among men for one servant to accuse another to his master.

Verse 24. *Ten thousand talents.*

There were various kinds of talents. It is probable that Christ spoke of that which was most in use among the Jews. A talent was in value about £243, 15s. It does not matter to estimate the amount precisely ; it is sufficient to understand that the total amount was, at the lowest, very considerable.

Verse 28. *An hundred pence.*

A Roman penny was in value about 7½d. Whatever the exact amount, the debt was at most a very insignificant one.

Verse 34. *Until he paid.*

That is, always, as S. Chrysostom, Euthymius, and Theophylact suppose. It is not meant that they who are condemned will ever pay their penalties and be freed as if by the payment of their debt. This was the error of the followers of Origen. But they never will be freed unless they pay the penalty ; and as they can never do this they never can be freed. Nor is the meaning that God calls into question and punishes sins forgiven, because of the commission of fresh sins, but that Christ urged upon us that those who have not forgiven their brothers' sins God in turn will not forgive, although, as to what S. Thomas himself said (part iii., q. 88, art. i. 3), that former sins

which have been forgiven, if new ones are added, are in a manner punished, because of the ingratitude of the sinner. It is true, not that sins that have been forgiven are punished, but that if they were not so, a following sin would be punished less heavily, because the offender would be less ungrateful if he committed a fresh sin, as his former sins had not been forgiven him.

## CHAPTER XIX.

CHRIST DECLARES MATRIMONY TO BE INDISSOLUBLE—  
HE RECOMMENDS THE MAKING ONESELF AN EUNUCH  
FOR THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN, AND PARTING WITH  
ALL THINGS FOR HIM—HE SHOWS THE DANGER OF  
RICHES AND THE REWARD OF LEAVING ALL TO  
FOLLOW HIM.

Verse 1. *When Jesus had ended these words.*

EITHER when He had finished the whole conversation, or more probably, perhaps, the parable concluded in the last chapter.

*He departed from Galilee.*

S. Hilary reads "into Galilee" with an opposite meaning. It is certain that Christ was at this time in Galilee, and therefore could not depart into it. Besides, S. Luke says (ix. 51), that He departed thence that He might go to Jerusalem. S. Hilary probably thinks that He came not into Judæa but into its confines.

It has been questioned whether this is the history of the same events as those in *S. Mark* x. 1 ; *S. Luke* ix. 51 ; *S. John* vii. 10. All agree that S. Matthew and S. Mark speak of the same event. The doubt is of the other two ; for each relates many things afterwards which could not have happened subsequently to this arrival of Christ in Judæa.

There seems no doubt that S. Luke relates the same history :

1. Because it appears that this was the last journey of Christ into Judæa.

2. Because the Evangelists do not mention any journey after this one.

3. Because Christ signified this, saying (xvi. 21, xvii. 22), that He would go up to Jerusalem and there suffer, speaking as if His death were near at hand. S. Luke also speaks of it as the last journey. That he afterwards relates many things which took place subsequently to this departure need not seem extraordinary, as we continually see that the Evangelists do not observe the order of events.

Many think that S. John also describes the same events. This hardly seems credible because—

1. Christ says (vii. 6) that His time had not yet come, but in *S. Matthew* He twice declares the contrary: that the time of His Passion was at hand.

2. He is said in *S. John* (vii. 9, 10) to have gone up to Judæa alone; while it is said here that not only the disciples but also a great multitude followed Him.

3. Lastly, the departure of which S. John there speaks was not the last: as he says afterwards (xi. 7) that Christ came into Judæa again to raise Lazarus.

*And came into the coasts of Judæa.*

S. Hilary, as before said, thinks that Christ did not come into Judæa, but only to the confines of that country and Galilee; and S. Chrysostom and Euthymius agree with him. Some think, on the contrary, but apparently with no good reason, that He came to Jerusalem first, and then returned again to the regions of Judæa and Galilee. For the Evangelist declares plainly that He came directly from Galilee to the confines of Judæa, and that great multitudes followed Him. He came then into the confines of Judæa that He might come to Jerusalem. The Evangelist mentioned that place to describe exactly the scene of the

miracle which he was about to relate : " And," he says, " He healed them there ".

*Beyond Jordan.*

Both Judæa and Galilee were on this side, not beyond Jordan, but the expression " beyond Jordan " is used as by those who came up into the country from Egypt, as explained on chap. iv. 15.

*Verse 2. And He healed them there.*

This does not mean that Christ healed all who followed Him, but all who were sick, and perhaps not all these, but only such as were worthy, as *supra*, xiv. 14. S. Mark (x. 1) writes that He taught those who followed Him, which S. Matthew passes over. But even if S. Mark had not said this, we might have inferred it from Christ's custom. He rarely performed a miracle without teaching. For He always united acts with His words ; as S. Chrysostom and Euthymius have observed.

*There.*

That is, on the confines of Galilee and Judæa : for He would not have the Galileans who had followed Him come out of their own country ; or, as The Author supposed, that the Jews, who were slanderers, might not say that He led a great multitude after Him for the sake of His own glory.

*Verse 3. And there came to Him.*

It is not said whether the Pharisees came to Christ in the same place, but it is most likely that they did so, for the order of the history both in *S. Matthew* and *S. Mark* seems to imply as much. And this is the opinion of S. Chrysostom and Theophylact.

*For every cause.*

They do not say " for any cause," but " for every cause". For they had no doubt about some causes, as Origen (*Tract. vii. on S. Matt.*), S. Jerome, and Bede say.

There has been a doubt on what occasion the Pharisees put this question. Some think that it was because of what Christ had said: "All the Prophets and the Law prophesied until John" (xi. 13), as if He meant that the Law was now abrogated; and the Pharisees wished to know whether He would say this, in answering their question. But this reason seems very remote and not very applicable to the subject; both because Christ had long since declared such to be the case, and as they might have raised many other questions with the same object. Theophylact thinks that the question was caused by Christ's words (chap. v. 32). The Author, that the Pharisees raised the question of marriage as being themselves carnal; as they who are in ill-health talk continually of medicines. It may have been, as has been suggested, that the question was being agitated at the time by the Jews, like that of paying tribute to Cæsar (xxii. 17). Men ask different questions at different times. It is a conjecture worthy of the minds of the Pharisees that they asked this question rather than any other, because, as it concerned all men, it was full of invidiousness.

Verse 4. *Have you not read.*

Christ, in reply, exposed their ignorance of the Law, on the knowledge of which they especially prided themselves. Christ had done the same thing before (xii. 3-5), as Euthymius observes. S. Mark says that Christ asked them what Moses had commanded, which seems opposed to the passage. S. Augustin (ii. 62, *De Consens. Evang.*) says that S. Mark wished to express, not the words, but the will of Christ. It is probable that Christ said what both S. Matthew and S. Mark relate, but that He first asked the Pharisees, "What did Moses command you?" and they answered, "Moses permitted us to write a bill of divorce and put her away". Then Christ replied, "Have you not read that He who made them in the beginning?" &c.

(verse 4). To this the Pharisees objected again, "Why then did Moses command to give a bill of divorce and to put her away?" (verse 7). Christ did not answer them directly, but cited the testimony of Scripture, and caused God, or Moses, of whose doctrine the Pharisees boasted themselves followers, to answer tacitly for Him, as say S. Chrysostom and Euthymius. These two authors observe that Christ answered His opponents both by facts and by words: by facts, when He said, "Have you not read that He who made man from the beginning made them male and female?" and by words, when He said, "For this cause shall a man leave father and mother," &c. (verses 4, 5).

*Male and female.*

Questions have been raised as to where the force of these words lies. Some think it to be in the sex, as if Christ would teach that from the difference of sex one man ought to have only one wife, that from each as from two imperfect parts, as Plato says, one perfect man might be produced. This seems the opinion of S. Augustin (*De Civit.*, xiv. 22). All others put it, not in the sex, but in the number: as if Christ had said, "If God had intended one man to have more wives than one He would not have made only one woman in the beginning, but more". This is the opinion of S. Chrysostom, Jerome, The Author, Bede, Theophylact, Euthymius, and Strabus. To this it may be objected that the same argument would avail to prove that if the first wife died it would be unlawful to marry another. The first and second are accounted to be one, because they are both one flesh.

*And He said.*

He, that is, God, of whom Christ speaks. S. Hilary doubts how Christ said that God said this, when it was not God but Adam who said it (*Gen. ii. 24*; S. Augustin, *De*



*Gen. ad Litt.*, ix. 19). Theophylact and Euthymius (in *Comment.*) say that Adam spoke as a prophet by the Spirit of God, and that God spoke through his lips.

Verse 5. *For this cause shall a man leave father and mother.*

The Latins here put *hominem* for *virum*, as the Greeks read *ἄνθρωπον* for *ἄνδρα*; so verse 10.

*And will cleave to his wife.*

S. Chrysostom tells us that there are three chief points to be observed here. 1. To leave his father and mother. 2. To cleave to his wife, that is, not in any chance manner, but so as to be wholly conjoined, co-united, agglutinated. The Greek is *κολληθήναι*, the Hebrew *דבק*. 3. To be one flesh.

*And they two shall be in one flesh.*

*Εἰς σάρκα μίαν*, *in carnem unam*, "into one flesh". The Hebrew *לִבְשָׁר אֶחָד* *ad carnem unam*, that is, that they be one flesh, as explained in the verse following. (So *Gen.* ii. 7.) Adam is said to have been created *in animam viventem*, that is, "a living man". "And the Lord God built the rib which He took from Adam into a woman, *לְאִשָּׁה* that is, that she should be a woman. But how man and woman are said to be one flesh has been matter of question. S. Jerome, Bede, and S. Thomas (in *Catena* and *Comment.*) think that it refers to the children, which are the one common flesh of the husband and wife. Others explain like S. Paul (1 *Cor.* i. 16). Others of mutual love, as S. Paul in *Ephes.* v. 28; or of the power which the husband has over the wife as over his own flesh, as 1 *Cor.* vii. 4. Others, whose opinion seems preferable to that of the rest, say that one flesh means one person (*homo*); for "flesh" is often used by the Hebrews for the whole individual. Christ, then, means that man and wife are not two *homines*, but one *homo*—the wife being as the body,

the man as the spirit and soul. The man, therefore, ought no more to be separated from the wife than the soul from the body.

Verse 6. *What, therefore, God hath joined together, let no man put asunder.*

Christ does not say "whom," but "what," as speaking not of two but one flesh, as a little before He had said, "They are not two but one flesh".

S. Chrysostom has observed that Christ proved the bond of marriage both by natural and divine law : by the natural in the fact that God has made one woman for one man ; by the divine in the words, "A man shall leave father and mother and cleave to his wife". In these words God seems to have inseparably united the wife to the husband, as the Wise Man says (*Prov.* xix. 14).

Verse 7. *Why then did Moses command.*

S. Mark (x. 4) does not say that the Pharisees answered that Moses "commanded," but Moses "permitted". S. Matthew, on the contrary, says that Christ said that Moses did not command, but permitted ; but S. Mark writes that Christ said, "What did Moses command you?" This is easily explained from what was said before. 1. It is probable that Christ had asked them what Moses had commanded, and that they replied that Moses permitted them to put away their wives. 2. That Christ explained the origin of marriage, and brought forward the testimony of Scripture to prove that the wife was not to be put away. That the Pharisees further objected that Moses had commanded, using the word "commanded," not "permitted," to add force to their words. Christ again answered, not using the word "commanding," but "permitting" : "Moses, by reason of the hardness of your hearts, permitted you". In this way there is no divarication between the Evangelists.

Verse 8. *Moses, by reason of the hardness of your hearts, permitted you.*

Christ corrects the expression of the Pharisees. They had said "commanded"; Christ said "permitted". Why did Christ say that Moses, rather than God, permitted this, when in verse 5, on the contrary, He said that neither Moses nor Adam, but God said, "For this cause," &c.? Christ desired to add force to His words, and therefore, when asserting that it was not lawful to put away a wife, He said, not that Adam or Moses, but God had said, "For this cause shall a man leave," &c., though both Adam spoke and Moses wrote those words. When Christ answered the Pharisees, He would not say that God but Moses permitted, though God also permitted it. This is how these many authors are to be understood who explain this passage as if Christ signified that it was not God, but Moses, who permitted this divorcement; as if Christ wished to oppose God, whom He cited, to Moses, whom the Pharisees cited. Such is the opinion of S. Jerome, Bede, Strabus, S. Thomas, Hugo.

There are many questions on the passage.

1. For what reason was divorce permitted under the Old Testament? Tertullian (iv., *Cont. Marc.*) thinks that it was only lawful then, as now, for fornication; for he so explains *Deut.* xxiv., but with the only difference that when a wife was put away for that reason, it was allowed the husband to marry another, and now it is not. Origen, S. Chrysostom, and others think that divorce was lawful for many other reasons than this, and this seems much more probable; because—(1) If fornication were the only reason, there would have been no room for the question of the Pharisees. For it would have been great insolence in them to ask if a man might put away his wife for every cause, if it had only been permitted for fornication. But when they ask whether it were lawful to put away a wife for every

cause, we cannot doubt that they knew of many other reasons. This is seen from Christ's reply. He desired to narrow the licence given by Moses, and, as it had before been lawful to put away a wife for many reasons, He now permitted it for fornication alone. This is shown also from the above words of *Deut.* xxiv. 1, in which it is plain that Moses did not speak of fornication : for which the wife was not to be put away, but stoned. (2) It was signified in the libel of divorcement that the woman had not committed adultery, chiefly that her honour might be preserved, and she herself be at liberty, if she wished, to be married to another husband. She might be put away, then, for other reasons than those of adultery.

What these were is not certain. De Lyra, in his *Comment. on Deut.* xxiv., gives two opinions : 1. For contagious disease or the like before the marriage. 2. Causes opposed to marriage, even if supervening after it, as if the woman were a witch or a child-murderer ; which Origen in his *Tract.* vii. on *S. Matt.* seems to approve, though speaking rather of the Evangelical than of the Mosaic Law.

2. The second question is : How the Jews were allowed to put away their wives, so as in putting them away they might not sin, or so as that they sinned indeed, but were not punished by the Law. That great divine, S. Thomas, has specified four ways in which a thing can be permitted :

(1) Because it is good, but not commanded ; as the selling of all we have, and giving to the poor, which is not commanded.

(2) Because it is a less good, when the greater good is not commanded ; as marriage is allowed because virginity, which is a greater good, is not commanded.

(3) As it is evil, but not forbidden ; as God is said to permit all sins, because while He is able to prevent them, He does not please to do so.

(4) Or because the thing is evil indeed, but is not pun-

ished by the Law ; as God permitted the Jews to practise usury with Gentile nations, because He had not appointed any punishment in the Law against those who did it. In one other way a thing is said to be permitted : when it is evil, if it is permitted by Him who has given the power of dispensation, it ceases to be evil. So it was permitted the Prophet Osee to have children of fornication (*Osee* i. 2). Some think that either in this last manner, or as a less good, it was permitted the Jews for certain reasons to put away their wives ; others that it was not as a less good, but as a less evil, so that they sinned indeed in putting them away, but would not be punished. Either opinion is probable, and each has good authorities in its support. The former, The Author and S. Thomas ; the latter, Tertullian (*De Monog.*), Origen (*On S. Matt.*), S. Jerome, and others. It seems a hard saying that, after so ample a permission from God, the Jews sinned in putting away their wives ; especially as before the explanation by Christ it could not certainly be discovered from the words of *Deuteronomy* whether it were a precept or a permission ; and if a permission, it did not appear to have been permitted as an evil, which would seem sufficient to free those who took advantage of the permission, from blame. The words of Christ, that it was permitted from the hardness of their hearts, can easily be explained. It was permitted for this reason, that they might thus have no sin.

3. The third question is : With what ceremonies and precautions the bill of divorce was given. Ten are mentioned by the Hebrews :

(1) That the wife shall not go away without the permission of the husband. This was explained in the bill of divorcement.

(2) That the bill shall be given into the wife's own hand, as directed in *Deuteronomy*.

(3) That it should be executed under the hand and seal of at least two witnesses.

(4) That there should be three generations of the husband.

(5) That it should be written legibly, clearly, and distinctly ; and so that no error might be found in the text.

(6) That if any spot of ink fell upon the page, the document should have no authority, but another copy should be prepared.

(7) That there should be no vestige of erasure, to avoid all possible suspicion as to its genuineness.

(8) That the document should be longer than broad.

(9) That all the witnesses present should seal with his own seal.

(10) That the husband on giving it should say : "Receive this bill of divorce from me, and be cast out from me, and be given to some other man". The form of the document was as follows :

"I, Rabbi N., son of Rabbi N., son of Rabbi N., on the first day of the second month of the year N. from the creation of the world, have, of my own free will, without compulsion, repudiated N., the daughter of Rabbi N., the son of Rabbi N., the son of Rabbi N., and have given her a libel of Repudiation in her hand, a paper of cutting off, and a sign of division, that she may be cut off from me and go wherever she will, and that no one be able to prohibit her, according to the constitutions of Moses and Israel".

Verse 9. *And I say to you.*

S. Mark (x. 10) says that Christ spoke these words to the disciples alone, when they had come into the house. Euthymius observes that He probably said them twice. First, to all in common, as S. Matthew states, then privately to the disciples in the house ; and it is very probable that, as he relates (verse 10), the disciples said to Christ: If

the case of a man with his wife be such, it is not expedient to marry ; not speaking publicly before all the people, but privately and in some secret place, as they used to do when they had any doubt about anything in His conversations. Then, when asked by the disciples, Christ repeated the same words, although S. Matthew does not relate it, and He added what S. Matthew says about eunuchs and S. Mark omits.

The sum of the question is, whether the words of Christ, that it is lawful to put away a wife for fornication, are to be so taken as to allow both the husband who puts away and the wife who is put away to enter on a second marriage ? There are apparently three opinions on the point :

1. That it is lawful, an opinion common to the followers of Luther and Calvin, and which is also found even among some Catholics.

2. The second opinion is that it is lawful for the innocent person, not for the guilty one. Some of the Ancients we find held this opinion, as Tertullian (iv., *Against Marcion*) and S. Ambrose, or Remigius (*On 1 Cor. vii.*). Origen (*in loc.*) also says that some Catholic bishops of his time permitted those husbands whose wives had committed adultery to put them away and marry others. This was allowed in the Council of Elvir.

3. The third is that which the Church has followed, and which is so confirmed by the Council of Trent in our own times, that it cannot be a matter of doubt to any Catholic : that Christ so permitted the adulterous wife to be put away, that it should be lawful neither for the adultress nor the husband to marry as long as either lived. This opinion seems so binding, both from the authority of the Church, which alone ought to satisfy a Christian man, and also from the weight of the arguments by which it is supported, that the only wonder is that anyone can be found to dispute it. It has, firstly, the best and most

ancient authorities in its support. In *xlvi. Can. Apost.*, whoever puts away his wife and marries another is absolutely, and in all cases without exception, if only he had put her away for fornication, excommunicated. This reason would certainly have been produced if it had been lawful, when a wife was put away for this cause, to marry another. So Evaristus (in his *Epist.* ii.) and Clement (*Alex. Strom.*, ii.) teach without any exception. Origen (*Tract.* vii. on *S. Matt.*) blames those bishops who allowed this in his time, as being ignorant of the custom of the Church. So S. Chrysostom (*Hom.* xvii. on *S. Matt.*), S. Jerome (*in loc.*, and in his *Epitaph. Fabiolæ*), Innocent I. (*Ep. to Exuperius, Bishop of Toulouse*, chap. iv.), S. Augustin (*To Polluentius*), Isidore (*De Officiis*, ii. 19), and Bede (*Comm. on S. Mark* x.). So the early councils ruled—Milevis (*Can.* xvii.), Africa (if it is a different one), and others. The decrees of Elvir and Arles, therefore, cited above, to the contrary effect, are either spurious or apocryphal, or are to be so understood that it is not lawful for a man who has put away his wife for adultery to marry another in her lifetime, but only after her death. It may be asked why this should be granted when no one doubts that it was lawful? The answer may be that it was expressed to show the difference between the husband and the adulterous wife, who, even after her husband's death, was sometimes ordered for penance to abstain from marriage. Lest, then, any should understand the same of the husband, it allowed him to marry another wife, but, by ordinary ecclesiastical law, only after her death.

Besides, by this reason which Christ gives, either nothing is proved or this is proved. He first declared that God in the beginning created not more than one woman, but one only for one man, and therefore that it was not lawful to have more wives than one—that is, to put away one and



marry another. This also avails to prove that if a wife is put away, even for fornication, it is not lawful to marry another. For it does not matter why she was put away, the same reason for not marrying another always remaining—namely, that one woman was made for one man. Besides that Christ not only reduced all the many reasons of the Jews for putting away their wives to one only—fornication, He also took away entirely the writing of divorcement, which He said was only given them because of the hardness of their hearts. After Christ, a writing of divorcement was not heard of among Christians. But the giving a writing of divorce, and a man's being able to marry another wife, and a wife to marry another husband, was the same thing; and thus Christ took away the power of a husband marrying another wife, and of a wife being married to another husband, by taking away the writing of divorcement. This one reason alone, if there were no other, would be enough and more than enough to confirm this decision. Again, if a wife who had been put away for fornication were allowed to be married to another husband, it would follow that her condition would be better than that of a woman who had been put away because of some disease or something that was not her own fault; for the adulteress would be allowed to be married to another husband, while her husband was yet alive, and he would not be allowed to marry another wife.

It can hardly be doubted that Christ allowed the putting away of an adulterous wife, that the husband might not be compelled to pass a life of unhappiness, as the wife had proved herself unworthy of her husband's living with her. But this reason does not extend so far as to allow the husband to marry another wife. It is sufficient for him to be freed from the first.

The assertion of heretics, therefore, that Christ gave nothing to the husband, if He only allowed him so to put

away his adulterous wife, as to be obliged to live without a wife all his life, is senseless, and shows that these valued the body more than honour and tranquillity.

For good men count it a great gain to be free from a wicked wife, although not allowed to marry another. Nay, the wisest even consider this a benefit, as they who have once suffered shipwreck think it wrong to tempt the sea a second time. It is a greater good to miss finding a bad wife, than to find a good one. But a man cannot miss a bad wife unless he is unable to marry.

The reasoning of S. Jerome certainly has much weight. That if husbands who have put away adulterous wives were allowed to marry others, it would be a daily occurrence that men who desired new wives would invent charges of adultery against their present ones, that they might put them away and take others. Christ, therefore, did not increase the strictness of the old Law, but loosed it. For not even in the old Law was there so much room for the desire for putting away wives, since the adulteress was not to be put away but stoned. But, as these heretics falsify the matter, Christ gave permission to husbands to change their wives daily. For how easy is it to discover either true or probable adultery in a wife! How easy to invent it! They who explain the words of Christ thus do not appear to understand His Spirit, or to see that when He desired to restrain evangelical discipline, and to teach that marriage was indissoluble, He ought not only not to have given power to husbands when they had put away their adulterous wives to marry others, but rather to have put the compulsion upon them, if they would not be without wives, of enduring the adulteress, and endeavouring to convert, and not repudiate her. For it was the will of Christ that the husband should not put away even the adulterous wife, but, to console his suffering, He permitted, not commanded, him to put her away.

S. Jerome greatly confirms this view, namely, that Christ did not say that the woman who has been put away and is married to another commits adultery, but he who takes her does so. The only reason of this must be that Christ was speaking of the wife who had, in fact, been put away for adultery, of whom, because she had actually committed the sin already, He would not say that she was guilty of it, for this would have been to say nothing new, but He said that the man who married her was guilty, to show that it was unlawful either for a woman who had been put away to be married to another man or for another man to marry her. And we should explain this passage of Scripture by others, in which the same subject is treated of. In these it is always absolutely said that it is not lawful for a woman who has been put away to be married to another man, as in *S. Matt. v. 32*: "I say to you that whosoever shall put away his wife, except by the cause of fornication, maketh her to commit adultery; and he that shall marry her that is put away committeth adultery"; on which it has been shown that the word "whosoever" is to be understood without limitation. Again, *SS. Mark and Luke*, when relating the same history, said without any exception that whoever married a woman who has been put away committeth adultery: "Whosoever shall put away his wife and marry another committeth adultery against her" (*S. Mark x. 11*). No other reason can be given why S. Matthew excepted fornication and S. Mark did not, except that S. Mark wished to explain that it was sometimes lawful for a man to put away his wife; that is, if she had committed adultery. But S. Mark wished to teach that it was never lawful to marry another wife even if the former had been put away on account of adultery. In these words S. Mark uses the word *super eam*, that is, by a Hebraism, *contra*, the word על in Hebrew meaning both *super* and *contra*. S. Mark means to show that it was not more lawful for the husband of an adulteress

to marry another woman than, when his wife had committed adultery against him, he should do the same against her ; for it is not lawful, in this kind *facere paria*. S. Luke (xvi. 8), however, says generally: "Everyone that putteth away his wife and marrieth another committeth adultery, and he that marrieth her that is put away from her husband committeth adultery". Supposing for a moment that S. Matthew had not written his Gospel, we could have gathered no other meaning from SS. Mark and Luke than that it was never lawful for a husband who had put away his wife, for any cause whatever, to marry another ; and that it was never lawful for a wife, for whatever cause put away, to be married to another man. There would have been no room for doubt. Now S. Matthew has written but obscurely, so that there has been a controversy about his meaning ; and we should explain the difficult words of S. Matthew by the clear and perspicuous ones of SS. Mark and Luke. These, it is supposed, wrote after S. Matthew, and it is probable that they would seek to say in clear and lucid terms, and without ambiguity, what S. Matthew had stated darkly. They said that it was never lawful for a man who had put away his wife to marry another woman. We must receive this, therefore, which was spoken without ambiguity, and as by the way of explanation. Again, S. Paul wrote his *Epistles to the Romans and Corinthians* after S. Matthew. In each of these he treats of this question, and brings up no exception ; but (in *Rom.* vii. 3) he says generally: "Whilst her husband liveth she shall be called an adulteress if she be with another man, but if her husband be dead she is delivered from the law of her husband ; so that she is not an adulteress if she be with another man" ; and (1 *Cor.* vii. 10) S. Paul explains the words of Christ on the subject. Who doubts that he would have stated the exception, if there had been any, by which a woman put away was allowed to be married to another

man? As it is, he says generally, absolutely, and universally that she should either remain unmarried or be reconciled to her husband. He speaks of a wife going away from her husband, because of adultery, for which cause alone she could do so; otherwise he would not have left it in her own power that she should either remain separated from her husband, but continue unmarried; or be reconciled to him; but he would have directed her in other terms to return to him, as it was not lawful for her for any other cause than fornication to live separate from him. He gives this direction, not of his own opinion, but from the law of Christ, that she should either live unmarried or be reconciled to her husband.

Again, if the meaning of the passage were what these heretics think, as if S. Matthew's words (verse 9) meant that whoever puts away his wife, except for fornication, and marries another, commits adultery, but whoever puts her away for that cause and marries another does not commit it; and whoever marries a woman put away for any other reason commits adultery, but if she were put away for that one cause, does not commit it—if this were, indeed, the meaning, the sentence would be imperfect. Christ said simply: "Whoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery, and he that shall marry her that is put away committeth adultery". This in the judgment of the heretics is understood to mean, if he puts her away for any other cause than fornication but does not marry another. But Christ did not explain this, which should have been explained first of all.

In our explanation the sense is full and perfect. If a man put away his wife for any other cause than fornication, although he do not marry another, he commits adultery, because he causes his wife to commit it, as explained on verse 32. But if he put her away for fornication and marry another, he also commits it, not because he put

away the adulteress, but because he married another woman.

The word adultery therefore applies here both to him who puts away his wife for any other cause than adultery, and to him who, when he has put her away for this reason, marries another. That is, whoever puts away his wife, except for fornication, commits adultery, that is, causes her to do so; and whoever marries another commits adultery, for whatever reason the first was put away: commits adultery, that is, against his former wife, as S. Mark explains it. It will be objected that if this is the meaning, the Evangelist ought to have said, Whoever puts away his wife except for fornication, and he who marries another, commits adultery. But he does not say, "and who marries another," but "and marries another". From the Hebrew custom the relative preceding is to be repeated; all else requisite to the understanding of the passage has been explained on chap. v. 32.

Verse 10. *If the case be so.*

S. Ambrose (*Exhort. ad Virg.*), S. Jerome, S. Chrysostom, and Euthymius understand these words to mean: If a man may not put away his wife except for the cause of adultery; but S. Gregory Nazianzen, in the *Oration* in which he cites these words, thinks that they were those of the Pharisees, either from lapse of memory, or, as is perhaps more likely, signifying that they were those of the Apostles, speaking from the custom and meaning of the Pharisees.

If it be so, the meaning apparently is: If it be not lawful when a wife has been put away for adultery to marry another, it is better not to marry. We can believe that what was especially new and more than commonly difficult may have the more moved the Apostles; and not to be allowed to marry another wife when the former had been put away for adultery must have appeared much newer and more difficult

than not being allowed to put a wife away for any other cause than adultery, especially as there was the question before them, whether she could be put away for any reason but this.

*The case.*

‘*Ἡ αἴτια*, “the matter,” or *jus conjugale*. The meaning is: “If it be so between man and wife, or if a man marry under this law and obligation, that if his wife be put away for adultery, he may not marry another, it is better not to marry. This is the view of Theophylact and others. The Greek word *αἴτια* means properly “guiltiness”.

*Of a man.*

*Hominis* in the Latin for *vir*i, as the Greek has *ἄνθρωπον* for *ἄνδρα*, as in verse 5, as the antithesis, “with his wife,” shows.

*It is not expedient for a man to marry.*

The Latin here reads *nubere* for *uxorem ducere*, contrarily to the custom of the language, which uses *uxorem ducere* of the man and *nubere* of the woman. It follows the Greek, in which *γαμήσαι* is used of either the man or woman. In this case there is no question as to the application, as the Apostles spoke of the position of the man towards his wife.

Verse 11. *All men take not this word.*

They seem in error who affirm that Christ neither allows nor disallows the assertion of the Apostles, that it is not expedient to marry. He approves it; and in the highest degree desiring to bring them on to such a point of perfection, that what they had spoken in words they should carry out in deeds, He shows that, as we say, they had said more than they were aware of. His words, “All men take not this word,” are very generally explained to mean: “Not all are able to do what you say—abstain from mar-

riage, for all have not the gift of abstinence, but only they to whom it is given," as S. Paul would have the Corinthians "enlarged," that they might be capable of still greater gifts from God. The expression, then, here means that they are not capable of so much virtue as to be able to live without marriage. Origen (*Tract. vii. on S. Matt.*), S. Gregory Nazianzen (*Orat. in hæc Verba*), S. Ambrose (*Ad Virg.*), follow this meaning. But it seems an erroneous view of the case, because when Christ said, "He that can take it, let him take it" (verse 12), He clearly meant by "take" "understand," as shall be shown on the passage.

The meaning, therefore, clearly is, that not all understand it; not all receive it into their minds. The word *verbum*, although it sometimes signifies the whole matter, yet is naturally taken only for a discourse, nor should it be understood otherwise unless some reason compel us. Nothing in this passage does so, but it here means simply "to understand," as S. Epiphanius says, whom I have followed: "Not all understand my saying". Christ was accustomed to speak in this manner, as in *S. John viii. 3*: "You seek to kill Me, because My word (*sermo meus*) hath no place in you".

It may be objected that from what follows, "But they to whom it is given," is to be understood not of comprehending, but of the gift of purity. Even to understand is a gift of God; as Christ Himself declares: "No man can come to Me except the Father, who hath sent Me, draw him" (*S. John vi. 44*). For He was speaking against those who did not believe what He said, because they did not understand.

*For there are eunuchs.*

Christ, as S. Hilary says, describes three classes of eunuchs: those by nature; who are made such by men; who are self-made. The first class has neither merit nor



blame ; the second has blame, if by their own consent ; the third has merit.

*Who have made themselves.*

There is a twofold force in these words : (1) They show, as S. Chrysostom has observed, freedom of will in the act ; (2) That it was not done without repugnance of the flesh.

*For the kingdom of heaven.*

That is, that they may merit the kingdom of heaven, as Origen, S. Hilary, S. Chrysostom, The Author, and Euthymius agree in explaining it.

*He that can take let him take it.*

Christ did not mean by these words that all can take it. He alludes to the stadium, whence the metaphor is derived, in which all indeed run, but only one receives the prize. We have before observed that "take" means here "understand". Christ desired to say nothing else than what He said in other places, when treating of a subject of importance : "He that hath ears to hear let him hear" (xi. 15 ; xiii. 9, 43, &c.).

Verse 13. *Then.*

After this, but it does not appear whether immediately after, for S. Luke relates many things in the meantime, and we should not narrow the history too much.

*Were little children presented to Him.*

It is clear from S. Luke xviii. 15 that there were not only young children, but even infants. For, when they saw the adult men and women who came to Christ loaded with benefits of different kinds, they began to bring their infants also, that, as far as their age allowed, they also might share in His gifts. They were not sent to be healed, like the men and women, but to receive some spiritual grace, as the Evangelist immediately explains.

*That He should impose hands upon them and pray.*

It was a custom of the Hebrews, for the elders and those who were especially gifted with divine grace, to bless the youngers, by the laying on of their hands upon them, as in *Gen.* xlviii. 14, 15. For these reasons parents brought their children to Christ. Hence the custom arose of the laity, and especially children, being blessed by the priests and bishops, even outside the Church—a custom which The Author praises.

*And the disciples rebuked them.*

That is, as Euthymius says, prohibited them. The Greek word ἐπιτιμᾶν also bears this meaning, as has been said before. It seems doubtful why the disciples should have rebuked these parents. S. Chrysostom, The Author, Euthymius, and Theophylact say that they thought them of an unbecoming age to be brought to Christ, and that His dignity would suffer if He were occupied in blessing children; and, therefore, like servants who were jealous of the rank of their master, they sent them away. This is more probable than the opinion of S. Jerome and Bede; not that they were unwilling that the children should be blessed by the hand and voice of the Saviour, but that, not yet having the fullest faith, they thought that He would be wearied by their importunities. The words of Christ, "Suffer the little children to come unto Me, for the kingdom of heaven is of such," seem to confirm the opinion of S. Chrysostom.

Verse 14. *Suffer the little children to come to Me.*

Christ calls infants in age and simplicity children, as He immediately explains. For the kingdom of heaven is of such. He did not say "of these," but "of such," to include not only children in age, but such as resembled them in disposition, as Origen, S. Jerome, S. Augustin

(i. 19, *De Peccat. Merit.*), Bede, Theophylact, and Eustathius have observed. S. Luke has expressed it more fully (xviii. 17): "Amen, I say unto you, whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a child, he shall not enter into it". The followers of Calvin have no other testimony in proof of the baptism of infants than this: "Suffer little children". For they apply those most clear and powerful words (*S. John* iii. 3), which the Church has always produced as authority for the baptism of infants, not to baptism, but to doctrine; and thus they are unable to oppose the Anabaptists, who deny that infants should be baptised at all. For although some argument may be built upon this passage, as S. Bernard has shown in his *Epistle* ccxl. it is not strong enough to form the foundation of a doctrine so necessary to salvation.

*And when He had imposed hands upon them.*

The Evangelist said (verse 13), they brought children to Christ that He might lay hands upon them and pray. He now says that He laid His hands upon them, but does not say that He prayed. The reason of this Origen thinks to have been that the infants were capable of the imposition of hands, but not of prayers, for from their tender age they could not understand them. But there was no need that the children should understand the prayers to be made partakers of them, as there is no need now that they should understand the words of baptism to gain the effects of it. Prayer is continued in the laying on of hands; and there is no laying on of hands alone without prayer and benediction. S. Mark (x. 16), has said this plainly: "And embracing them and laying His hands upon them, He blessed them".

Verse 16. *And behold one.*

S. Luke (xviii. 18) says that he was a ruler, that is, a chief man; because, as S. Matthew (v. 22) says, he was

very rich. Many of the Ancients seem to confuse him with the lawyer of whom S. Luke (x. 25) makes mention ; for they say that this man was also a lawyer, as S. Jerome, S. Ambrose (*On S. Luke* xviii.), and S. Cyril Alexand. (*Thesaur.*, ii. 1). More correctly S. Basil (*Homil. cont. Divit. Avarit.*) not only does not think him the lawyer, but opposes him to the lawyer of whom S. Luke wrote ; for the lawyer came to Christ to tempt Him : this man came to learn of Him. And if he had been a lawyer the Evangelists would rather have stated this than the other circumstances they mention so carefully ; namely, that he was a ruler, that he was rich, that he was young. The same author, as well as S. Epiphanius (*Ancorat.* and *Her.*, lxix.), says that this young man came to Christ, not with a guileless and honourable intention, but for the purpose of tempting Him, an opinion which S. Basil, as above, and S. Chrysostom and Euthymius in their commentaries on this passage, seem completely to refute.

First, S. Mark (x. 17) says that he came very reverently, humbly kneeling, which the haughty, pride-inflated Scribes and Pharisees who came to tempt Christ were not used to do.

Secondly, whenever anyone came to tempt Christ, the Evangelists always say so ; but they have not mentioned such a thing of this young man.

Thirdly, he asked what he wanted yet, to obtain eternal life.

Fourthly, when Christ said to him, "Go sell what thou hast and give to the poor," he departed sorrowfully, which he would not have done had he only come to Christ with a wicked and dissembling mind. S. Chrysostom appears therefore to argue much better for his opinion than S. Jerome. It may be added that they who came to tempt Christ were not accustomed to ask about themselves and their salvation, but about the law and controverted ques-

tions, such as whether it were lawful to give tribute to Cæsar, to put away a wife for any reason, which was the greatest commandment, whose wife the woman would be in the resurrection, when the seven brothers had had her. But this young man asked no such questions, but only those which were necessary for himself: "What good shall I do that I may have eternal life?"

*Good Master.*

The young man addresses Christ thus to gain His goodwill; others called Him Rabbi, when about to ask anything of Him. This man, to show a greater attraction of mind to Him, calls Him Good Master.

Verse 17. *Why askest thou Me concerning good.*

The Greek in almost every copy has, "Why callest thou Me good, there is none good but only God?" and so Origen (*Tract. Sept.*), S. Matthew, with SS. Hilary, Chrysostom, and others. Our version reads: "Why askest thou Me?" as do some Greek copies, and S. Jerome (*in loc.*) and S. Augustin (*De Trinit.*, i. 13). Origen adopts both readings. Their opinion, however, can hardly be admitted, as making Christ speak in a double manner. 1. "Why callest thou Me good?" Because he had said: "Good Master". 2. "Why askest thou," &c. If we read it thus, the meaning is not, Why dost thou ask Me what good thou shouldst do, but Why dost thou ask Me, calling Me good.

*One is good—God.*

The Arians objected this text to the Catholics, as proving that Christ was not God, because He appears by it to shut Himself out from goodness and divinity by these words: as say S. Epiphanius (*Her.*, lxix.); S. Cyril Alexandria (lib. ii., *Thess.* i.); S. Basil (*Ep. ad Amphilocho.*, *Comment. on S. Luke* xviii.); S. Ambrose; S. Augustin (iii. 23., *Cont. Maxim. Episc. Arian*), and others *passim*. They all

answer that Christ does not deny Himself to be good, and to be God. For men, and angels, and many other things than God, each in his own way, are evidently good, as S. Epiphanius proves at length from Scripture ; but He says that none is good but God, in the way in which God is good, that is, *per se*, and in His own nature. So, too, says S. Paul (1 *Tim.* vi. 16), that God alone has immortality, though it is certain that both the angels and our souls are immortal. But God alone is immortal in His own nature ; that is, not by participation with another, as S. Justin has shown in his questions to the Christians. Even if Christ, therefore, had not been God, He would have been good ; and as He does not shut Himself out from goodness, by saying, " There is one good," so does He not shut Himself out from divinity, nay, He rather shows by these words, as shall shortly be explained, that He is God.

But why did Christ so answer the young man? The reason would appear to be, as The Author (*Hom.* xxx.), S. Jerome (*Comment.*), S. Augustin (*De Trinit.*, xiii.), Bede, Theophylact, Euthymius (*in loc.*), and others have said, that the young man, though he had a good faith in Christ, had not a sufficiently firm and perfect opinion of Him. It is clear that he endeavoured to honour Christ with the highest titles he knew of, to obtain His favour ; and yet we see that he called Him nothing more than " Good Master," as if he could think nothing greater of Him. For if He had believed Him to be God, he would have addressed Him either as his God, or most certainly Lord ; but Christ, knowing that he was honestly consulting Him about his salvation, wished to assist and perfect his faith, and by questioning to lead him on to the belief that He was not merely a " good master," but that He was the good God, and he therefore took his own words out of his mouth, to teach him that he needed to understand well what he had said. He had called Christ " Good Master ".

Christ teaches him that no one is good but God, to show that He was God Himself if He were good, as the young man, not knowing what He said, had called Him. There may be some ambiguity in the words, for in one sense He is called "Good Master," and in another "Good God"; but this very ambiguity adds force to the argument, for Christ speaks as if He did not know the difference between "Good Master" and "Good God". He has used a like ambiguity in other places (chap. viii. 22).

It may be asked why Christ did not answer others in the same manner who may reasonably be supposed to have addressed Him either in the same or in similar terms? The reason may be that this young man called Him "Good Master," as if he thought himself to be giving Him some singular title, such as others were not accustomed to give Him. Christ wished to correct this opinion, and to teach him that he had given Him a title not sufficiently noble and great; for He was not only a "Good Master" but also the "Good God".

*But if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments.*

As here, when to keep the commandments is said to be the only cause of our salvation, faith is not excluded; but the meaning is that, as among the things that are to be *done*, it is enough to keep the commandments, so when faith only is named among the causes of justification and salvation, works are not excluded; but again, the meaning is that (among the things that are not to be done but are to be known), it is enough to believe; and that faith although dark, and knowledge although in some degree obscure, should be to us equal to all sciences and all doctrines.

Verse 18. *Which?*

S. Jerome, as above, thinks that the young man came to Christ to tempt Him. But it is clear from the context

that he asked the above question because he had come to Christ as to some supremely great teacher, to learn something above the Law ; but, as will be proved on verse 20, he not only knew but had lived in the practice of the Law. He, therefore, asked "which," as thinking that perhaps Christ would give him some precepts beyond the Law.

*Thou shalt do no murder.*

Christ sets forth the precepts of the Decalogue, not all, but only those of the second table—nor these in their order, but as they suggested themselves ; for it was not His object to recite the whole *memoriter*, and to the letter, but to state what they contained. We may ask why He did not mention the commandments of the first table only ? Euthymius says that it was because the observance of these is a secret one, *i.e.*, it lies hidden in the soul ; but the works of the second are manifest : not to kill, not to commit adultery, &c. This does not appear to be a good reason. For Christ did not desire, as some think, to convict the young man, but to teach him, and not to teach him how he might appear to be good, but how he might be both good and just ; for Christ desired to make him not a hypocrite but a Christian. The true reason seems to be that whoever keeps the second table keeps also the first, as S. Paul says (*Rom. xiii. 9-10*). Besides, Christ here, and S. Paul there, desiring the observance of the commandments, sets forth only the second table.

It may be objected that by this reasoning S. Paul ought much more to have set forth the first table, for he who keeps the first table keeps the second also ; for he who loves God does all things that He commands ; and the first table is much shorter than the second, and ought to be set forth as a kind of summary of all the commandments. The answer may be : "It is so ; yet it is more easy to love our neighbour than God," as S. John says (*1 Ep. iv. 20*). It is the custom of Holy Scripture to lead us



to the observation of the commandments of God through the second table, as by a more easy, full, and familiar way.

Verse 19. *Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.*

This is in a manner a brief compendium comprehending in one word all the teaching of Christ, like that of S. Paul (*Rom. xiii. 9, 10 ; Galat. v. 14*). It is not one single precept, but the sum of all those in *Levit. xix. 18*.

Verse 20. *All these have I kept from my youth.*

S. Hilary, S. Ambrose, S. Jerome, and others on this passage, think that the young man was speaking untruly ; but the opinion of S. Basil (*Hom. cont. Divit. Avar.*), S. Chrysostom, and Euthymius seems more probable, that he spoke the truth, and that when Christ heard it He loved him (*S. Mark x. 21*). This would not have been the case otherwise ; for no pretence could have deceived Christ, who knew all things. Christ, it is clear, had a singular love for the young man, because of his observance of the commandments—such a love as He not only had not for others who were sinners, but not even for this young man before. He heard his words, not that Christ was ignorant before or that He did not love the young man before, but that He might show Himself, after the manner of men, to have learnt by the answer what He did not know before, and to have begun to love him whom He had not loved before. Christ loved him, not only for his natural goodness, as He loves all men in common, but in a peculiar way, because of his having kept the commandments, to do which is not of nature.

Verse 21. *If thou wilt be perfect, go, sell what thou hast, and give to the poor.*

That Christ in these words is giving, not a precept, but a counsel, is clearer than the sun at mid-day ; for who is so

blind as not to see in what chosen words He carefully distinguishes between precepts and counsels. When He gives a precept He does not say, "If thou wilt be perfect," but "If thou wilt enter into eternal life". When He gives a counsel He does not say, "If thou wilt enter into life," but "If thou wilt be perfect". He gives eternal life as a reward for keeping the commandments; but to the observance of counsels, not life eternal, but "treasure in heaven": that is, He promises the greater riches of eternal life; and not only the being blessed, but the being chief of the blessed, and their judge—"You shall sit upon twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel".

No better words can be used than those of S. Augustin (*Serm. lxi. de Temp.*) either to prove or explain evangelical counsels. "Counsel," he says, "is one thing; precept another. Counsel is given that virginity may be preserved, and that we may abstain from wine and flesh, and sell all things and give to the poor; but precepts are given that justice may be preserved, and that men may turn from evil, and do good." It is said of chastity, "He that can take it, let him take it"; but not of justice, "He who is able to do it," but "Every tree that does not bring forth good fruit". "He who hears counsel willingly and obeys it, will have the greater glory; he who does not fulfil a precept, unless he afterwards repent, will not escape punishment." Again to the same purpose in many other of his writings.

*And thou shalt have treasure in heaven.*

Christ alludes to the custom of merchants who give a less sum in present money, in the hope of receiving more in future. He calls eternal life a treasure because goods are laid up here that they may be found there with increase; as treasure is apt to increase daily when it is put out (*S. Matt. vi. 20*).

Christ also alluded to alms-giving, signifying that he who gives alms lays up, as it were, treasure in heaven, as Solomon says in *Proverbs* (xix. 27). Christ wished to meet the young man who was wealthy, and probably given to making money, on his own ground ; by the hope of still greater wealth, to entice him to the kingdom of heaven, as men of that stamp are apt to be led. He said, in a manner, " Even if you have great riches here, you shall have much greater if you will sell these and give them to the poor ". It was so far from the will of Christ to make allusion to the wealth which the young man thought himself to possess, that He rather wished to signify that he had nothing, if it were compared to the riches of the kingdom of heaven. For though wealthy, he had no riches at all if compared to such as kings, and not all of them, possess, but he should have a treasure in heaven. Christ therefore does not balance the riches of the kingdom of heaven with the wealth of the young man, but opposes the former to the latter, as if one should compare the vast wealth of the entire world to a very small property. Besides, Christ meant that he should have greater glory in heaven if he followed evangelical counsels, than if he only obeyed mere precepts. For they who follow the precepts receive each his penny, as shall be explained in the following chapter (verse 19). But he who adds besides counsels, as by giving all his goods to the poor, will receive not merely a penny but a greater treasure. From this it is clear that men, by alms-giving and all other good works, do merit the kingdom of heaven. The same meaning is found here as in *S. Luke* xvi. 9 ; nay, even a greater. For there also Christ treats of alms, and " to make themselves friends " is nothing else than to merit their friendship and favour. And in this sense all the ancient authorities explain it (*S. Cyprian, Lib. de Op. et Eleemos.* ; *S. Hilary* ; *S. Chrysostom, Hom. lxiv. on S. Matthew* ; and others).

*And come follow Me.*

There are three counsels that Christ gave the young man : 1. To sell all his goods ; 2. To give the money to the poor ; 3. To follow Him. This was the last of all. For Socrates and many other philosophers, as S. Jerome says, held their wealth in contempt ; but because they did not follow Christ, this was of no advantage to them. It is less certain what Christ meant by " follow Me " than is commonly supposed. S. Clement Alexandria (*Strom.* iv.), S. Jerome (*in loc.*), and some others understand it of the imitation of Christ. S. Matthew seems to confirm this (x. 38), where some Greek copies read : " Take up thy cross ". But the word " come " shows that Christ spoke not of imitating Him alone, but of a bodily presence with Him, and of His inviting him to follow Him like the Apostles and disciples. But the words of S. Mark, if we admit them, are not opposed to this explanation. For the Apostles and disciples most especially carried the cross, following Christ not only with their hearts but also with their persons.

*Verse 22. And he went away sad.*

He went away sad, not because, as some have heretically said, his conscience convicted him of not having kept the commandments as he boasted to have done (*vide* verse 20) ; but because he did not think that there could be anything so difficult as that which Christ had counselled him to do, in selling his goods and giving to the poor. The Evangelist tells us why he was sad : " for he had great possessions ". It is easier to part with a few things than with many.

*Verse 23. A rich man.*

S. Mark (x. 23) and S. Luke (xviii. 24) term rich men those who have, not unlimited wealth, as it were, but considerable property. Christ spoke, as S. Matthew explains it, of men with great possessions.

*Shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven.*

S. Mark says that Christ looked round Him and said : " How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God ". This action applies both to the " commendation " and emphasis of the words. Christ seems to have looked round Him to demand attention when about to say a thing very important, and for the same reason to have used an expression of admiration.

We may question how far Christ said this of the rich young man, and how far to the Apostles, when his riches kept the former, not from observance of the Law, nor from entering the kingdom of heaven, but only from the attainment of evangelical perfection. We may reply that Christ took occasion, from the young man who was deterred by his wealth from evangelical counsels, to speak of riches at large, and how men are kept back by them from eternal life.

Verse 24. *And again I say to you.*

S. Mark (x. 24) says that the Apostles, before Christ spoke these words, wondered at the meaning because of their hardness and severity. Christ answered with still greater severity ; for the above words, " Again, I say," are not a mere repetition, but an enlargement of the former as well. " It is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven."

*It is easier for a camel.*

The inexplicability, or, rather, the wonderfulness, of this saying, has caused some to think that the word " camel " (*κάμελος*) should have been rendered " ship cable," as if it were against reason that such a huge and ill-shapen beast as a camel should go through the eye of a needle, whilst a cable has some affinity with a needle ; and Suidas tells us that *κάμελος* carries both meanings. Theophylact under-

stands it thus, and some others, probably Greek authors, as we learn from Euthymius.

The reference has been thought, with less reason, to be to a certain gate in Jerusalem, which was so small that a camel, unless unloaded, could not pass through it. The supporters of this opinion do not observe that the more extraordinary the saying appears, the more likely it is to be true. Christ said that it was no more difficult for a camel to pass through a needle's eye than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven, because this was in the highest degree unreasonable and even impossible. Christ desired to show that it would be as much so for a rich man to enter heaven, as He added in verse 26. The reason, therefore, that induced these persons not to understand the passage of a camel should rather have influenced them to the contrary conclusion, as it did Origen, SS. Hilary, Chrysostom, and Jerome, The Author, Juvenius (*Hist. Evangel.*, lib. iii.), and Sedulius (*Carm.*, iv.). The Syriac has ܠܡܠܚ which can only be explained of the animal. It was, in fact, a proverb, and it meant when a thing was pronounced impossible that a camel could more easily pass through the eye of a needle than such a thing be done. The Talmudists frequently use the expression, as many of the learned have observed.

It would appear to be of more importance to enquire why Christ said this of riches rather than of other things, so many of which hinder a man still more in this course ; such as ambition, lust, anger. The reason may be that other things, although they hinder some more, yet retard the greater number less ; but riches commonly hinder almost all men, because almost all give their minds up to avarice from the greater to the less (*Isa.* lvi. 11 ; *Jerem.* vi. 13 ; viii. 10). S. Paul himself, speaking of the preachers of the Gospel themselves, says : " All seek the things that are their own, not the things that are Jesus Christ's " (*Philipp.* ii. 21).

Verse 25. *Who, then, can be saved?*

It is as if they had said : " As all men so study wealth, and a rich man cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven, who can be saved ? " S. Mark says (x. 26) that the Apostles said this among themselves, that is, silently, so that they themselves alone might hear. This is to be understood through verse 26.

Verse 26. *Beholding.*

Christ, it may be supposed, looked upon the disciples to show that He knew their thoughts and understood their words, though secret. S. Mark says that the Apostles murmured these things among themselves.

*With men this is impossible.*

All the Evangelists agree in teaching that (1) Christ taught that it was difficult for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven ; (2) that it was impossible, which is a great proof that they have given us not merely the meaning but the actual words of Christ, and that He desired to confirm His doctrine more by strengthening it ; for (1) He simply said that it is difficult for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven ; and (2) that it was easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle ; (3) that it was wholly impossible, but with men, not with God.

Verse 27. *Then Peter answering.*

That is, began to speak ; a Hebraism, as before observed, when a person does not necessarily reply to a former speaker or answer a question. But S. Peter may appear in this place to have replied to the words of Christ.

*Behold we have left all things.*

Some think the reason of Peter's having asked this question was the words of Christ to the young man, " Go, sell all

thou hast"; but Peter doubted, for himself and the other Apostles, what reward they should have. For, although they had left all things, they had not sold their goods, and given to the poor, so that they might not appear to have satisfied Christ's counsel, nor to be worthy of obtaining the treasure promised to the young man in heaven. Or it may be that Peter wished to signify that he and the other Apostles had already done what Christ required of the young man, as Origen, S. Jerome, and S. Chrysostom say, or why did he say doubtfully, "What shall we have?" Why did he not believe that he and the other Apostles would have that treasure in heaven, because Christ promised treasure to the young man if he would leave his great possessions? But the Apostles had left little, or almost nothing, and therefore did not venture to hope for a treasure in heaven. But as they hoped for some position there, they asked what it should be? It cannot be thought, as some say, that the Apostles had not sold their goods and given to the poor; for although it is not expressly said in Scripture, yet this is credible, and it would have been in accordance with their virtue and perfection, that either all, or at least some of them, should have sold what they had, and given to the poor; whilst they who had not sold it, no doubt gave it to their kindred who were poor. This is easily concluded from S. Peter's question; for when he said, "We have left all things," although he did not say, "We have sold all things and given to the poor," he would have this understood, because he signified that he had done all that Christ commanded, as in the verse following Christ answered, "Amen, I say to you who have followed Me," although He did not say that they had left all things, this may surely be understood. It may be asked how S. Peter and the other Apostles had done what Christ required of the young man, for they had only left a few things of small value, but he was commanded to



leave many possessions. S. Gregory (*Hom. in Evangel.*) shall answer this, and S. Bernard on his words on this passage. He leaves much who leaves the wish of having. Such things were left by His followers as would be desired by those who did not follow Him.

Verse 28. *You who have followed Me.*

Christ did not say, "You have left all things," but in saying the greater, He understood the less, as S. Jerome has shown.

*In the regeneration.*

S. Hilary and The Author think that this refers to our baptisms. But it is clear that the judgment of the last day is here called regeneration, whether because the whole world was then to be renewed, and in some degree regenerated, as say S. John (*Apoc.* xxi. 1, 5), S. Peter (2 *Ep.* iii. 13); Isaiah (lxv. 17 and lxvi. 22), and S. Paul (*Rom.* viii. 21); or because men, having then put off mortality, and put on immortality, will be in some way regenerated, as S. Paul declares (2 *Cor.* v. 4; *Philipp.* iii. 21); so too S. Augustin (*Cont. Pelag.*, iii. 3; iv. 11; and *Cont. Jul.*, ii.), S. Gregory (*Moral.*, iv. 23), Theophylact and Euthymius (*In Comment.*), and S. Bernard (*in loc.*).

*When the Son of man shall sit.*

S. Hilary and The Author, who explain regeneration, as above, of our baptisms, take the sitting to be, not that of the Son of man on His tribunal in judgment, but the session at the right hand of the Father which He began to occupy shortly after His Resurrection and Ascension. But S. Chrysostom, Euthymius, and Theophylact, although they explain this of the judgment, do not take it to mean any session either of Christ or the Apostles, but only His glory and majesty, in which Christ and the Apostles will appear.

It is clear that the allusion here is not to the session of Christ at the right hand of the Father ; and all the Fathers of the Church except S. Hilary and The Author say that when Christ speaks of the judgment, He says, "You shall sit". What the seats of Christ and the Apostles will be is not certain, and it is perhaps curious to enquire, and rash to give any kind of definition. But it is not so to follow conjecture wherever it may probably lead us.

It seems probable, then, that the clouds will be the seat of Christ and the Apostles, because Scripture everywhere says that Christ will come on a cloud (as xxiv. 30 ; xxvi. 64 ; *Apoc.* i. 7), and it is very probable that He will sit on the same cloud as that on which He will come. This may be gathered from another passage of the *Apocalypse* (xiv. 14). For S. John speaks of Christ when he calls Him "the Son of man," and of the judgment as a sickle in His hand. Christ signifies in this place that the seats of the Apostles will be like His own : "You also shall sit on the twelve seats". As if He had said : "As I shall sit, so also shall you".

It may be a question how there will be twelve seats, when it is plain that Judas, one of the twelve, will not sit with the rest. If, therefore, there were only eleven to sit there, there would only be eleven seats ; and if S. Paul and Barnabas, who were afterwards extraordinarily called to be Apostles, are added, there would not be twelve, but thirteen. S. Augustin (*De Civit.*, xx. 5) and Bede (in his commentary on this passage) say that a certain and definite number is put for an indefinite and uncertain one, as if it were said, "You shall sit each upon his own seat". But because there were twelve Apostles, with whom He spoke, He said twelve seats, as if Judas also were to sit. Not that Christ thought that he would sit, but because if he had remained in his office like the others, he would have done so, as has been observed by S. Chrysostom. For Christ speaks, as

theologians say, according to present justice, and not so much of persons as of the status of the persons. As if He said, "It is the officium of Apostles to have this reward proposed to them, that he who has rightly discharged it shall sit upon his seat in judgment and judge the rest".

### *Judging.*

It is the opinion of S. Jerome that "to judge" means here to condemn. There have been different opinions on the subject.

1. The common opinion is that the Apostles will only judge by comparison; because, while they themselves believed, the other Jews did not; as "the men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment with this generation and shall condemn it, because they did penance at the preaching of Jonas, and behold a greater than Jonas is here". But this generation at the preaching of Christ Himself will not repent. The Queen of the South will condemn the Jews, "because she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon, and a greater than Solomon is here". This is the opinion of S. Jerome, The Author, and many others.

2. Others say that as Christ promised more to the Apostles in this place than to the men of Nineveh or the Queen of the South, the Apostles would judge not by comparison merely but as the ministers and, as it were, heralds of Christ to proclaim His sentence.

3. Others, again, are of opinion that they will be as assessors of Christ; as they who sit with the judge are said to judge with him. This seems less probable, because the heretics put it prominently forward, referring to *Rom. xi. 34*: "Who hath known the mind of the Lord, or who hath been His counsellor?"

It may appear certain that the Apostles will not judge by

comparison merely, but in some more honourable manner ; because, by comparison, not only all the just but many sinners also and unjust will judge those who are more unjust than themselves, as the men of Nineveh will judge the Jews ; and it is clear that something is here ascribed to the Apostles which is not only not given to the unjust, but not even to all the just. This may be that they will judge as Doctors of the Church and witnesses, to accuse those who would not receive their testimony and teaching. They will condemn these men, convincing them of unbelief, and showing that they did all they could that they might not believe and be saved. As Christ says of Moses (*S. John* v. 45): “ Think not that I will accuse you to the Father, there is one that accuseth you, Moses ”.

Christ says that Moses will accuse them, not that he will do so in words, but because they would not believe in him, nor keep his Law. He says the same of the Apostles, because, as Moses was the Lawgiver and Doctor of the Old Testament, so were the Apostles of the New. As Christ then said in the former case, that Moses would condemn them, so He here uses the word “ judge ”.

But it will be asked, Will Moses sit upon his seat and judge the twelve tribes ? Possibly so ; and why not ? But it is not a necessary consequence, because Christ does not give this honour to every teacher, but only to those who have left all things for the sake of the Gospel, and followed Him as poor men. Shall the Apostles, then, alone sit ? The opinion of Origen (*Tract viii. on S. Matthew*), S. Augustin (*De Civitate*, xx. 5), S. Cyril Alexandria (*Comment. on Isaiah lx.*), seems probable—that all who have done the same thing, that is, have sold their goods for the Gospel, and given to the poor, will have the same honour. But this honour may appear to have been promised, not merely because they were teachers of the Gospel, but because they were the first by whom it was published ; as

not all shall possess it who taught the old Law, but he alone who taught it first.

*The twelve tribes of Israel.*

A similar question rises here: Why are the Apostles said to be about to judge the twelve tribes only, if there were thirteen, as is the case if Levi be included, which is, without doubt, to be judged? and the Gospel was preached not to the Jews only, but to the Gentiles also, of whom many were obstinate and would not believe. S. Augustin and Bede again reply that a certain number is put for an uncertain. This is probable; but not so their reasoning, which is that the number twelve signifies perfection and universality, as if the meaning were that all men shall be judged. For why did they use the number twelve rather than seventeen or ten, which are also used to express universality? The reason may be that Christ spoke to accommodate Himself to those to whom and to those of whom He spoke.

He spoke to the Apostles who were twelve. He spoke of the Jews among whom He was, to whom He had first come, and with whom He desired to compare the Apostles. For, if He placed the latter before the Jews, He placed them before all men. But although there were in fact thirteen tribes of the Jews, yet, because Levi was exempt from the number, and was given by God in the place of the first-born, they were not numbered: as if they belonged no more to men but to God, and there were always said to be only twelve tribes. Christ, therefore, knew that not only twelve Apostles, but even thirteen, Paul and Barnabas being added, and Judas shut out, would judge not only the twelve tribes, but all the nations as well to whom the Gospel had been preached.

There is another reason why twelve tribes are named. The Gentiles who believed the Gospel were, as it were,

inserted among the Jews and gifted in a manner with citizenship so that that they were no longer Gentiles, but Jews ; that is, as believing and confessing, they were enrolled among the chosen people into the twelve tribes ; as S. Paul says to the Romans (xi. 17, 19, 24) : " Thou wert a wild olive," that is, a Gentile grafted into the people of the Jews ; and again : " The branches were broken off," that is, the Jews who did not believe were accounted as Gentiles ; I, when a Gentile, was made a Jew by believing. This is why S. John in the *Apocalypse* (vii. 5) reduces the number of all the predestined to the twelve tribes of Israel ; and (xxi. 12) says that he saw the names of the twelve tribes of Israel written in the gates of the Heavenly Jerusalem. The opinion of Theophylact and Euthymius, therefore, that the Apostles would judge the Jews alone, seems one that cannot be received.

Verse 29. *And everyone that hath left.*

S. Chrysostom, The Author, and Theophylact think the meaning to be, that everyone who has done the same thing shall receive the same reward. But Origen, whose opinion seems preferable, thinks that Christ spoke of another and inferior grade of men. He had spoken before of those who had sold all their goods, and given to the poor, and followed Him. He speaks now of those who have not sold all their goods, or given to the poor, or followed Him in the likeness of Apostles, but who have still left something for Him, either father or mother, brothers, sisters, wives, children, houses or land. To these no so great honour is promised as to the Apostles, but they would have a great reward, receiving a hundredfold and life eternal.

It has been asked how a wife can be left for Christ, because marriage cannot be dissolved. S. Chrysostom and Euthymius reply that Christ spoke here of marriage as He said of life (x. 39) : " He that findeth his life, shall lose

it, and he that shall lose his life for Me shall find it," and *vid.* xvi. 25. Christ would not, therefore, have the marriage dissolved, but He would be preferred to the wife, and if the wife hinder her husband from following Him, she should be left, not by the marriage being dissolved, but by a divorce. He wills that the husband should lose his wife, rather than Christ: that spiritual be preferred to carnal things; as explained by Fulgentius (*Ep.* ii. *de Stat. Viduali*). With regard to the marriage of Gentiles: if one have been made a Christian, and the other not, and this one cannot live with a Christian without injury to religion, the Christian can leave the non-Christian, *dissoluto matrimonio*, as S. Paul has laid it down in 1 *Cor.* vii. 15. But a general sentence ought not to be confined to one kind of case.

*He shall receive an hundredfold.*

That is, more things, and better in an infinite degree. So says S. Paul (*Rom.* viii. 18). A finite number is here again put for an infinite, as in *S. Luke* xviii. 30. He says not a hundredfold, but "much more". S. Luke and S. Mark (x. 30) add, "In this present time". The words, as we learn from S. Jerome, gave occasion to the Millenarians to support their heresy. They say that after the Resurrection there will be a thousand years in which the just, for everything they have left in this world, will receive a hundredfold. S. Jerome replies to them thus: "They do not understand that if in the other things there was a fitting promise of payment, in the case of a wife it would have been wickedness, that he who had put away one wife for his Lord should receive a hundredfold in the future". Bede, who follows S. Jerome, and several other Moderns, think the meaning to be, to use the words of S. Jerome, that "they who have put away carnal things for the Saviour shall receive spiritual ones, which will be in worth and comparison as if they received a hundred for one".

But this is opposed to what S. Mark says. He says, not only that they shall receive a hundredfold in this life, but he explains in what these things will be received : "Houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands". Hence Origen, The Author, Theophylact, and Euthymius explain a hundredfold as meaning that love, in some measure, makes all things among Christians common. All men will be brothers, all women sisters ; all goods will be in common, as among the primitive Christians (*Acts* iv. 34). But how will wives be in common, who among Christians are most especially proper? It may be said that they will be so, as that they will love all Christian men in the Lord as their own husbands.

There seems another way of explaining these words : houses, brothers, mothers, children—not that they will receive these things, but that they will receive Christ, who is in the place of all things, and who ought to be to us father and mother, brother and sister, wife and children, house and lands, as Christ Himself has said (xii. 49, 50).

S. Bernard, on this place, has observed that Christ did not say this to the Apostles, because they had not left house and land, which they did not possess. But they certainly left fathers and nets, which they had, and followed Christ at His first word of invitation (iv. 22). He did not promise these things to them therefore, but because they had done greater things than these, He promised them greater rewards : "You shall sit upon twelve seats," &c.

Verse 30. *And many that are first shall be last.*

It hardly appears with what object Christ added these words. S. Chrysostom and Euthymius think that He did it to incite men to the closer following of evangelical perfection, by offering them more valuable rewards. There may have been still another reason—that the Apostles might not rest in too great security because they were



called the first of all, but should run not as in uncertainty (1 *Cor.* ix. 26, 27).

When Christ said, "Many first shall be last," it is clear that He did not call those first who are so, either in their own opinion, and dignity, and merits, or who think themselves so, but those who were called first, and came to the vineyard of the Lord, as the following parable declares (xx. 16). He does not say "all," but "many," showing that some who were first will, when their penny is paid, be first still. Lastly, Christ says (not) that many first shall be nothing (*nullos*) in the kingdom of heaven—that is, will be shut out of it,—but should be last—that is, less than many who came after them. He speaks of those who received every man a penny, but they who came last were in the first place, as the following parable explains.

## CHAPTER XX.

THE PARABLE OF THE LABOURERS IN THE VINEYARD—  
THE AMBITION OF THE TWO SONS OF ZEBEDEE—  
CHRIST GIVES SIGHT TO TWO BLIND MEN.

Verse 1. *The kingdom of God is like to an householder.*

THAT is, the kingdom of heaven is as if a householder went out early in the morning to hire labourers into his vineyard. The Evangelist does not compare the kingdom of heaven to a man, but to a householder. He declares the men to resemble labourers, and the work in one to resemble that in the other; that is, what happens in the kingdom of heaven is compared to what happens in the vineyard of the householder. We have shown this from Bishop Hugo, who was the best, and perhaps the first, to explain the parable thus.

The kingdom of heaven means here either the Church militant only, as many think, or the Church both militant and triumphant, as others explain it. For in the militant Church the labourers are hired, and in the triumphant the penny is paid. The whole parable to verse 16 is easy there being only two points in it which have any difficulty: one, What is the object of the whole parable? that is, to what end it was given; the other, What are its necessary and, as it were, peculiar parts, which add to the meaning, and how they are to be understood?

Some Catholics even think that Christ in the parable only intends to show that God, contrarily to all opinion, will give to some more and to others less than they ex-

pected. But there seems no need of any other explanation than that of the Evangelist himself. He had said in the former chapter : " Many that are first shall be last, and the last shall be first ". He added immediately a parable, and this is what it means : that many who had been first should be last, and many that had been last should be first. This is clear from the last verse of the parable, in which Christ repeats the same words : " So shall the last be first, and the first last " (verse 16). It confirms this opinion that in the Greek and in many MS. Latin copies the causal particle " for " (*enim*, γάρ) is placed at the beginning of the first verse : " For the kingdom of heaven is like," so that this chapter ought not to be distinguished from the preceding, lest the subject contained therein should be broken off ; but rather from the following verse (17), where Christ begins a new subject. Whoever first divided the chapters did not see this.

It was so far from the intention of Christ to teach that the glory of all the blessed would be equal because it is bestowed, not according to merits, but freely, that, in fact, He showed the entire contrary, that the glory of all would not be equal, because it is not bestowed freely but according to merits ; and that which is given according to merits is not given equally to all, but more is given to some and less to others, according to the merits of each. This is plainly shown, first, by the proposition, to prove which the whole parable is introduced. The proposition is : " Many that are first shall be last, and the last first ". The subject of merits and reward gave occasion to the parable. For Christ had said to the young man : " If thou wilt be perfect, go, sell all thou hast " (this is to merit), " and thou shalt have treasure in heaven " (this is reward). S. Peter had said : " We have left all things and have followed Thee " ; that is, he sought a reward for his merits. Christ answered, " Amen, I say to you ". He promised that re-

ward. He added a general saying : "Whoever hath left house or brethren," and this is also merit ; "one hundred-fold". This, again, is reward. He added immediately : "And many that are first". He signifies, therefore, that many who are first shall be last, because although they came first to the vineyard they laboured less, and therefore merited a less reward. Again, the beginning of the parable refutes those mentioned above. "He went out early in the morning to hire labourers." A labourer is one who works for the reward which he has merited by his labour ; and "to hire" is a word of justice, that is, of merit and reward. For we hire on a compact, according to desert ; and verse 2 : "Having agreed with the labourers for a penny a day, he sent them into his vineyard". To make agreement for a penny is justice and not grace only. Besides, the householder said in verse 4 : "Go into my vineyard, and I will give you what shall be just". He could not more clearly state the justice of merit and reward. But here, as afterwards, we will say that he promised less than to the first labourers, with whom he made agreement for a penny a day. But he promised to those, not a penny, but whatever was just. To this the steward (verses 13, 14) answered the labourer who complained : "Friend, I do thee no wrong ; didst thou not agree with me for a penny ? Take what is thine, and go thy way." What is this "I do thee no wrong" but "I have given thee what is just" ? What is "Take what is thine" but "Take what is just ; take what is owed thee ; take what thou hast merited, and go" ? As the labourers in the vineyard merit properly and truly their day's penny, so they who labour in the Church of God truly merit eternal life. The end of the parable is that the reward of eternal life answers not to the time each has laboured, but to his labour and work performed.

For it often happens that one man may only labour for a single hour, and do as much as another in a whole day,

and will therefore receive an equal reward, that is, the same penny, in the same sense clearly as the Wise Man (*Wisdom* iv. 13) : " Being made perfect in a short space, he fulfilled a long time " ; and thus no one should boast of the length of his service, for " many that are first shall be last " .

It may, however, be asked why the same penny is given to all ? for this appears to show an equality in glory. Christ only desired to teach us that some can do more in a short than others in a long time.

But why, then, did the householder not give more than a penny to those who came at the eleventh hour, if the last were to be the first ? These were preferred to the others, in that when they had come the last, they received their penny first of all. They received the same penny, then, because they had laboured as much in one hour as the others had done through the whole day. They received it first, because this was a part of their great praise by which they gained the first place ; because they had worked in in one hour as much as the rest in many. For equal work deserves equal payment ; greater diligence and shorter time merit the first place.

It may be objected that this is said in verse 14 : " I will give to this last even as to thee," and in verse 15 : " Is it not lawful for me to do what I will ? "

It appears from these words as if the penny were given, not of merit and justice, but only at the will of the householder. This was not the reason of his reply, but he wished to maintain the dignity of his position. It did not become the person of a householder to inform a simple labourer why he should give the same to the last as to the first, but to speak as his master : *Sic volo sic jubeo*. For wise masters, if their servants ask them why they order this or that though they may have the best reason for what they do, are not used to give account of their actions, but simply to state their will. " Why dost thou direct this to be done ? "

“Because I please.” And this wise householder did not wish to put the man who complained to shame, by explaining why he gave as much to the last as to the first, namely, because they had done as much as the others. This, as S. Chrysostom has said, would have been to take an indirect notice of the negligence of himself, and those others who came first. Pertinently to this place Theophylact, in his *Commentary on the Romans* (ix. 19), has observed that God, when dealing with men who are not evil and unteachable, does give account of His actions, but when dealing with the evil and ill-disposed only declares His will, such men not being worthy of His giving them any kind of account. Of this there are innumerable examples in Scripture, some of which Theophylact produces, and this one among them ; for because this labourer complained unreasonably, and with malice, the master answered as he did : “Take what is thine”. But in the preceding chapter, when Christ was conversing with the Apostles and others more teachable, He explained why a less reward should be given to some and a greater to others. For to those who only kept the commandments He promised eternal life (verse 17), but to those who sold all they had and gave to the poor and followed Him, like the Apostles, He promised treasure in heaven, that is, a greater and more excellent glory (xix. 21) ; and a greater still to the Apostles, who had not only left all things, but were to be the first preachers of the Gospel (verse 28), with a less glory to those who had given up less—house or brother (verse 29).

So far we have explained the object of this parable to which all its particular sayings tend. The other difficulty is, What are its proper and necessary parts? and what is the meaning of each?

For, as has often been said, and as S. Chrysostom teaches, in every parable there are some parts peculiar to it, and, in a sense, necessary, without which the conclusion

cannot stand. Others, as it were adjuncts and, as they may be termed, ornaments (*emblemata*), either for the explanation or the ornamentation of the whole.

In this parable there are apparently eight necessary parts. 1. The householder who hired the labourers into his vineyard. Most authorities suppose that he was God, whose is the vineyard, and of whom Christ says: "My Father is the husbandman" (*S. John* xv. 1); and as another parable says in the following chapter (verses 28, 33); *S. Mark* xii. 1; *S. Luke* xiii. 6; and as in the Prophets, God everywhere calls His people a vineyard—as *Isa.* iii. 14; v. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7; xxvii. 2; xxxii. 12; *Jer.* ii. 21; xii. 10; *Ezek.* xvii. 6, 7, 8; *Joel* i. 7, 12. So *S. Irenæus* (iv. 70), *S. Athanasius*, or whoever was the author of *The Questions* (lib. ii.), *S. Gregory* (*Hom.* xix. in *Evangel.*), *Bede* (*Comment. in loc.*).

Others think Him to be Christ, who is always going out into this world as into a market-place, to hire labourers into His vineyard—for it was He who formerly appeared to the Patriarchs and spoke to the Prophets. So say *S. Hilary* (*Can.* xx. on *S. Matt.*), *The Author* (*Hom.* xxxiv.), *Theophylact* (*in loc.*). Either opinion is probable.

2. The second part of the parable is the day, in the morning of which the householder went into the market-place, and in the evening of which he paid the labourers. Many think that this day includes all the time from the beginning to the end of the world, as *S. Irenæus* (iv. 70), *Origen* (*Tract.* x. on *S. Matt.*), *S. Hilary* (*Can.* xx.), *S. Gregory* (*Hom.* xix. in *Evangel.*), *Bede* (*in loc.*), and others. This opinion receives confirmation from the certain fact that the evening signifies the day of the last judgment, when to each will be given his penny, that is, his reward according to his works; and as the evening is the last day of judgment, the morning will be the beginning of the world, and the day whatever time may intervene between the two.

Some think the day to be not the whole of this time, but the period from the first to the second Advent, as S. Athanasius (*Quæst.* 52). Others, again, take it for the entire life of each man, as Christ signified when He said, "Walk while you have the light" (*S. John* xii. 35 and ix. 4), meaning that death was our night. So S. Jerome and S. Chrysostom understand it; and Origen seems to prefer this meaning to any other. Certainly the words do not apply to the age of the world in which each man was called, but to that part of his own life in which he was called.

3. The third part is the vineyard, which some explain of the justice and commandments of God, to observe which is the object of our calling, as S. Irenæus, S. Chrysostom, and others. S. Athanasius (*Quæst.* 52) and Theophylact hold it to be our souls, which every man is ordered to cultivate. Some understand the Church, as Origen and S. Gregory (*Hom. xix. in Evangel.*), which appears to be the most likely idea of any.

4. The fourth is what is the meaning of each of the hours. They who take the day for the whole age of the world explain the first hour to be the time from Adam to Noah: the third that from Noah to Abraham: the sixth that from Abraham to Moses: the ninth that from Moses to Christ: the eleventh that from Christ to the end of the world. S. John appears to allude to this when he says that "this is the last hour" (*Ep.* i. 11, 18); so S. Hilary, The Author, S. Gregory, Theophylact, and others. S. Jerome refers to, but does not approve, this opinion. Some understand the different hours to signify the different stages of each man's life—the first hour, infancy: the third, puberty: the sixth, manhood: the ninth, the decline to old age: the eleventh decrepitude. For some are called from their first infancy and their very birth, as Samuel, Jeremiah, John the Baptist; others at other ages. So say S. Basil (*Regul. brev. Interrog.*, ccxxiv.). S. Jerome, Bede, Euthymius,



Fulgentius, Theophylact, and others accept this view. The different hours do undoubtedly signify, not the different periods of the world, but those of each man's life, because the meaning of the whole parable is that some accomplish more in a short time than others do in a longer. To prove this the question is not at what age of the world each man was called, but at what period of his life.

What the particular hours signify should not, perhaps, be enquired into too closely, lest we narrow the meaning too much ; for this necessarily belongs to the meaning of the parable, as explained above. That Christ named these five was not of necessity, but of custom, and to adorn the parable.

For the Jews, like many other nations, divided the day, from the rising to the setting of the sun, into twelve equal parts, or hours, as Christ said (*S. John* xi. 9) ; so that the first hour was at the rising sun and the beginning of the day, the third half-way to noon, the sixth noon, and the ninth half-way between noon and sunset, the eleventh one hour before sunset. The whole day again was subdivided into four parts, of three hours each, as the night into four watches, each of which consisted of three hours ; and this is why in Scripture the first, third, sixth, and ninth hours are mentioned more frequently than the others, as they contained the chief portions of the day. Christ also mentioned them here, not to signify any new mystery, but, as before said, to show that some were called by God earlier and others later.

It will be asked, why Christ did not then name four but five hours. The answer is obvious. He pleased by mention of the first quarter of the day and of the last to show that some were called at the beginning and some at the close of their lives.

5. The fifth part is the market-place into which the householder is said to have gone out to hire the labourers.

Origen and S. Augustin rightly understand the whole world which is outside the Church, in which men are either wholly idle or are absorbed in secular business, and are called thence into the Church as into the vineyard.

6. The sixth part is the penny, which signifies beyond doubt salvation and eternal life. S. Irenæus says that a penny was given because it had the image of the king on it, and they who are saved (*Rom.* viii. 29) are to be made conformable to the image of His Son (*Philipp.* iii. 21). This seems allegorical. The reason why a penny was given rather than any other coin may probably have been that a penny was perhaps the usual payment for a day's labour, as is stated (xviii. 28).

S. Chrysostom asks why the householder made agreement for the penny with those only whom he hired in the morning, but simply said to the others, "What shall be just I will give you". Christ spoke probably according to the general custom; for we do not fix a price to any labourers but to those whom we hire in the morning to do a full day's labour; and if any come later in the day we make no certain promise, but merely assure them of some payment.

S. Chrysostom, also, and Euthymius ask why God did not call them all in the morning. They reply that all were called, but all, as Origen says, were not willing to come; but it is shown that all who came the householder hired. God therefore calls all in the early morning, as He has said by the Prophet Jeremiah (vii. 13; xi. 7, 8; xxxv. 15).

S. Chrysostom thinks that their excuse, "No man hath hired us," was said to justify themselves, and not as being true, which appears to be very probable. For Christ in His parables describes men as they are, and the slothful and the idle always excuse themselves in this manner, when the truth is, that they do not seek employment, because they are not willing to work. Thus, if we ask a robust young

mendicant why he does not seek for work rather than beg, he will reply that he wishes for nothing else, but he can find no master. He does not find a master because he does not seek one, and he does not seek one because he will not work. S. Chrysostom thinks that the householder did not blame these men for their falsehood, because he would not accuse them, and make them sad, that he might the more easily induce them to work for him. The more obvious answer might be that the householder, though representing God, was not God, but man, and therefore could not know whether the men were speaking truly or not. Christ said what was probable, and the labourers excused themselves, and the householder answered them.

7. The seventh part is the evening, when the penny was paid. No one doubts that this signifies the end of the world, and the time of the final judgment. But this, it may be said, does not appear to agree with what was said above, that the day does not mean all this world, but the life of each man in it. If this be so, the evening is not the end of the world, but the close of each man's life. Though there appear to be this difference, it comes to the same thing, because there will be men even to the end of the world, and the day is the life of each, and the evening is the death of each. The last evening will be the end of the world, when all who are then living will die together, or be caught up into the heavens, as S. Paul tells us in *1 Thess. iv. 17.*

8. The eighth part is, that the householder commanded, when the payment was made, that those who came last should be paid first. This is of especial consequence to the understanding of the parable. The meaning plainly is, that they who came at the eleventh hour were preferred to the others, and made first, because they had laboured as much in one hour as the rest in the whole day. The payment was not made, as S. Chrysostom thinks, from the

generosity of the householder, and not from the deserts of the labourers, as the words show: "I will give you what shall be just". He said this, not only to those who were hired at the third hour (verse 4), but also to those hired at the eleventh, as the Greek version (verse 7) shows, and as the sense requires, and as is to be understood from verse 4.

These are the points of the parable which have a necessary meaning. The others are of less consequence. Such are, why five hours of the day are mentioned? Why the men were found idle in the market-place? Why they were not hired? Why the householder is said to have had a steward? For we should hardly seek in the kingdom of heaven, of which the parable is a kind of description, who the steward was, though Christ may seem to be such, who will render to every man his reward, as Isaiah says (xl. 10; lxii. 10; *Apoc.* xxii. 12). Though S. Irenæus (iv. 70) says that the Spirit is He, for, as S. Paul writes (1 *Cor.* xii. 11), "All these things one and the same Spirit worketh, dividing to every man severally, as He will". Of the same kind are the questions why a penny and no other coin was given? why they who came first murmured? For it is not meant that any who received eternal life would murmur, because others would receive glory, for there is no murmuring in heaven. But either nothing is meant, and this is related only in pursuance of the general custom in such cases, and to preserve the consistency of the narrative: or to show, as S. Chrysostom thinks, that the meaning might be, that they who came last would receive a reward so great that, if it were possible for the blessed to murmur, they would murmur at it, as in verses 14, 15. "Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own?" as the Greek reads, and as probably the Latin ought to read.

These words, as has been said before, are not intended to show that God, of His mere will, and with

no regard to justice, will give us eternal life ; but they are said because it is credible that the householder would answer thus if any labourer complained without reason ; or they may mean simply that God is not to account to us for giving more to some and less to others. If we enquire into these and other points of the same kind too closely, we shall not only lose our labour, but we shall incur the danger of following what is void of truth, or is without meaning, or at least is nothing to the purpose. For whoever seeks for that which does not exist, sometimes imagines what he is looking for, and will believe what is false rather than nothing. The human mind must be held in check or it will be led astray by its own subtlety, beyond all reason, and on matters of no consequence.

Verse 16. *For many are called, but few chosen.*

It may appear strange why Christ added these words, for they hardly appear to be in harmony with what has gone before. In the early part of the parable He spoke only of those who would be saved, for all had received the penny,—that is, eternal life ; but He speaks here of those who when called were not all saved, but most of whom were lost. Christ appears, from some special case, to have urged a general conclusion. He had shown by the parable that all would not receive an equal reward, but many of the last would be first and the first last, because not all who were called and came to the vineyard laboured with the same diligence. He concludes now that not all who were called will receive the same reward, because many would not come, as has been shown from Origen, S. Chrysostom, and Euthymius ; so in the previous chapters from the case of the rich young man who was hindered by his riches, and would not follow evangelical counsels, He concluded generally of all rich men, and, from the observance, not of counsels, but of precepts, declared that it is difficult for a rich man to enter

heaven. It is not meant that all are not called, for He calls all, who came into the world to call sinners to repentance (ix. 13). For all were sinners, and He calls all who died for all. Why, then, did Christ not say "all" but "many"? Because the all are many, and He desired to oppose many to a few, not all to none, as S. Paul said to the Romans (v. 19). For through the disobedience of one man not only many but all were made sinners, as he had said before (verses 12, 18). He said soon after, "Through the disobedience of one man many were made sinners," to oppose many to one, and to add force not only to the assertion, but to his own period. In the same manner Christ here uses the words "many" and "few"; by "many" meaning "all". This is shown by the subsequent parable of the marriage (chap. xxii.). Not only were all called to the marriage,—the lame, the blind, and those in the highways,—but they were even compelled to come in, and yet Christ concludes the parable in the same words, "many," "few," where it is certain that He opposes "many" not to all, but to a few: "For all were called".

Verse 17. *And going up.*

"Going up" does not mean here, as many even of the Jewish Rabbis think, that Jerusalem was the highest spot in the whole earth; but it means in Syriac and Chaldee, the language used by Christ, simply "to go". S. Mark relates it as follows: "And they were in the way going up to Jerusalem, and Jesus went before them; and they were astonished, and following, were afraid".

The readiness of Christ to go to His death, and the wonder of the Apostles, and their fear for themselves, are signified. They marvel at His going to Jerusalem with so much courage and firmness, when He had often warned them that He should undergo many sufferings (xvi. 21; xvii. 12). They feared for Him and for themselves.

Christ went before to show the Apostles the way to the cross, and to teach them how readily, when the need arose, they should endure death; as S. Paul, a true disciple of His, says (*Acts* xxi. 13), and as Origen observed.

*Took.*

"Separated;" as chap. xvi. 22. Christ would not inform the disciples before the people, lest the matter should be known publicly, and either His death be hindered, or it should appear to be brought about by Himself. We may translate the Greek word *παρέλαβε* by *aggressus*: He approached them to speak to them, as has been said before, and as is in accordance with this passage.

Verse 18. *Behold.*

This word appears here to be a particle indicative of a time near at hand.

Verse 19. *And they shall deliver Him to the Gentiles.*

To Pilate and the Romans. There is an antithesis here between Jews and Gentiles, as if between friends and enemies. As if it were said: "The Jews will not be content to punish the Son of man *ipsi per se*, but they will give Him over to His enemies that He may be punished the more severely and be put to death". For it was not lawful for them to put anyone to death (*S. John* xviii. 31; *S. Luke* xviii. 34). It is not to be supposed from this that they did not understand the words of Christ that He was going to His death, but that they did not comprehend the mystery of His death, and our redemption by it. For if they had literally not understood His words, they would not have been astonished at His going nor have dreaded His death, as S. Mark says (x. 32). We may enquire why Christ said these words to the Apostles as He approached Jerusalem. S. Chrysostom says that it was to strengthen them, and to teach them patience and constancy.

Verse 20. *Then.*

Then, that is, when she saw that His death was at hand, she sought about, like the friends of a dying man, for a share of His inheritance. This was the cause of her desiring them to be near Christ, and to obtain the first place for them in His kingdom : namely, what He had said of His closely impending death, as S. Jerome, Euthymius, and Bede have observed.

*The mother of the sons of Zebedee.*

Salome, as The Author observes, and as is found by a comparison of SS. Matthew and Mark ; for her whom S. Matthew calls the mother of the sons of Zebedee, S. Mark calls Salome (*vid.* S. *Matt.* xxvii. 56 ; S. *Mark* xv. 40). Who they were is stated by S. Matthew (x. 2). S. Mark (x. 35) says that "James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came to Him saying, Master, we desire that whatsoever we shall ask, Thou wouldst do it for us". This seems opposed to S. Matthew, but it is not really so, for their having asked it through their mother is not contrary to their being said to have asked it themselves ; as S. Augustin (*De Consens.*, ii. 64), S. Chrysostom (*Hom.* lvi.) reply. There is a similar example in chap. viii. 5, where S. Matthew says that a centurion came to Christ and asked Him to heal his servant, whilst S. Luke (vii. 3) says that he did not come himself in person, but that he came through his friends.

It is uncertain whether the Apostles persuaded their mother to seek this honour from Christ ; as if a woman, and, as many think, a relative of Christ—for Salome is supposed to have been a sister of the Virgin Mary—would more easily obtain such a request, and her sons would escape the charge of immodesty and the ill-will of the other Apostles, if what they asked were not asked by them for



themselves, but by their mother for them. So think many of the early Fathers—S. Augustin (*De Consens.*, ii. 64), S. Chrysostom, The Author, Theophylact, Euthymius, S. Gregory (*Hom.* xxvii. *in Evangel.*), and others. Some think, with great probability, that Salome, as their mother, asked it of her own motherly impulse, and without any concert on their part (S. Hilary, *Can.* xx. *on S. Matt.*; S. Ambrose, *De Fide*, v. 3).

The argument of some, that the mother of these Apostles was secretly instigated by them because Christ answered them and not her, is easily answered. "You know not what you ask." "Can you drink the chalice I shall drink" (verse 22). S. Ambrose and S. Jerome offer with pleasing piety to excuse Salome. The former says: "Consider what she asked with her sons, and for them. She was their mother indeed, and in her anxiety for the advancement of her sons, she showed a degree of importunity somewhat immoderate no doubt, but quite to be pardoned. And she was a mother advanced in years, of a devout disposition, deprived of her comfort, who at a time when she might have been aided or maintained by the exertions of her sons, suffered them to go from her, and preferred to her own pleasure the reward of their following Christ. Again, although it were an error it was a pious error. For a mother's longings know not patience. Although desirous of obtaining her wish, she was urged by a venerable cupidity which was not of gold, but of grace; nor was her petition an unbecoming one, for it was not for herself, but for her children. Consider the mother, think of the mother." S. Jerome adds: "The mother of the sons of Zebedee erred by a womanly error, and from piety; not knowing what she asked". The Author excuses them because they asked for nothing temporal, or carnal, or of worldly ambition, but only for spiritual perfection. S. Ambrose says the same of their mother.

*Adoring.*

*Προσκυνούσα.* Bowing herself, or bending her knee, to gain the favour and good-will of Christ.

*And asking something.*

The word "something" would seem to imply that the request was not a slight one, but was for something of consequence. So the Greeks say, *τὶ εἶναι*, "it is something"; that is, something of value. It was for this reason, probably, that the Evangelist says that she came kneeling, to show that her request was an unusual one. Why did she not say what she desired at once? Because she wished to explain herself first, and therefore she did not state at once what she sought for, but asked Christ in general terms to grant it, as we find in *S. Mark* x. 35. This was not said by the sons, but by their mother, as shown before. The mother came suppliantly and said, "I would that Thou wouldst give me whatever I ask". For they who desire a thing, but are in doubt whether they will obtain it, do not speak out at once, lest they should be refused. So the mother of Solomon asked her son not to put her to confusion (3 *Kings* ii. 20).

*Verse 21. What wilt thou.*

"The mother asks," says S. Jerome, "and the Lord speaks to the disciples, understanding that their request came from her sons. But" (as said before) "Christ answered the sons, not the mother, because, if not at their suggestion, yet for their good, the request was made."

*Say.*

A Hebraism for command, order, direct. So (chap. viii. 8) "only say the word".

*That they may sit.*

Some, among whom is Euthymius, think that Salome was moved to ask this by the words of Christ (chap. xix.

28): "You shall sit on twelve seats". For when she knew that all the Apostles would sit around Christ in the kingdom of God, she wished her two sons to sit, the one on the right hand and the other on the left. Euthymius thinks that she feared Peter, whom she saw preferred to the other Apostles in everything.

Verse 22. *You know not what you ask.*

Many thought that Christ said this, because they sought carnal and not spiritual things ; as if Christ were to hold a temporal rule like the kings of this world who have princes at their side, of whom he is held the most honourable who sits nearest to him (the king) ; and others, as S. Chrysostom, Euthymius, and Theophylact, take it, that they sought for spiritual not carnal gifts, and that Christ said : "You know not what you ask," because they asked for something greater and better than they knew. Others, again, say that they asked for spiritual gifts, that they might excel the other Apostles in goodness and desert, but not in their proper order ; "looking for the triumph before the victory," as The Author says. The words, "are you able," would rather seem to confirm this, as if to show them by what means they might be placed at Christ's right hand and left. "You know not what you ask" is as if what they asked were good indeed, but not properly understood by them ; the places they sought for being to be earned, not by prayers, but by desert. All these suggestions have reason : the last, perhaps, the most.

*Can you drink the chalice that I shall drink.*

It is clear that Christ refers to His passion and death—which He calls a "chalice," as in chap. xxvi. 39 ; *S. Mark* xiv. 36 ; *S. Luke* xxii. 42 ; *S. John* xviii. 11 ; but why He calls them a chalice is not evident. S. Chrysostom, Euthymius, and Theophylact think that it was because He underwent death as willingly as one would drink a cup of wine. The

word "chalice" is probably derived from the custom of a criminal having to drink a cup of poison, as in the case of Socrates. So *Ps.* cxv. 13: "I will take the chalice of salvation, and I will call upon the name of the Lord," that is, I will endure death willingly, and call upon the name of the Lord. So it is understood by Origen and S. Jerome. There is also another metaphor of the chalice in Scripture from the ancient custom of the Jews, by which the father of the family, or his most honoured guest, mixed the wine, according to his pleasure, and gave to some more and to others less. Thus a better portion fell to some and a worse to others. In this sense, the lot of each man as sent by God, good or bad, is called in Scripture a chalice, as in *Ps.* xv. 5; xxii. 5, which speak of good: *Ps.* x. 7; lxxiv. 8; li. 17, of evil; and in many other places of Scripture. The same thing is signified by another metaphor. For baptism is also put for suffering and death, as Christ speaks in *S. Luke* xii. 50. Hence martyrdom is also called baptism, a metaphor taken probably from those who are sunk into the sea to destroy them; for, in the Greek, baptism means submerging.

Christ did not put this question to the Apostles from ignorance, but according to the custom of men who ask a general who is looking on to a triumph whether he can defeat the enemy. He shows by what means they can arrive at the way to such honour, both by His words and by His example. By His words, as when He said, "Are you able?" and by His example, as when He said, "The chalice that I shall drink". He acted as a good leader, encouraging His followers to fight. So S. Paul (*Rom.* viii. 17; *Philipp.* ii. 5, 6, 7, 8; 2 *Tim.* ii. 5).

*We can.*

Some, as S. Chrysostom, Theophylact, and Euthymius, think that as the disciples made their petitions rashly and

ambitiously, so they answered in the same manner. Others say, that as they asked for they knew not what before, so now they promised what they did not understand ; not that they did not understand that Christ spoke of His death, but that they did not know what it was to die. Perhaps they answered, neither rashly nor ignorantly, but with love and truth, that they were prepared to die for Christ, as the result proved. Their subsequent flight with the other Apostles can very easily be explained. They were unable to assist Christ in any way, and we read that S. John, one of the two sons of Zebedee, followed Him even to the cross.

Verse 23. *My chalice, indeed, you shall drink.*

It is questioned by Origen, S. Jerome, and S. Chrysostom, how the two sons of Zebedee drank the chalice of Christ? S. James, we know, was put to death by Herod (*Acts* xii. 2), but we do not find that S. John was martyred, and he has been supposed to be alive even now. They answer that the exile of John was in the place of martyrdom, and that he was thrown into boiling oil at Rome. Thus, his will was not wanting for martyrdom, but martyrdom for his will. But when Christ said, "My chalice you shall drink," He did not necessarily foretell that they should meet death for Him, but only that He would give them permission to drink of His chalice, but that to sit on His right hand and on His left could only be given to those for whom it was prepared by His Father. He appears by these words to oppose these two things to each other: to grant them to drink of His chalice; and to permit them to sit on His right hand and on His left.

*But to sit on My right or left hand is not Mine to give to you,  
but to them for whom it is prepared.*

The Arians frequently apply this text to prove that the power of Christ is less than that of the Father. They

were answered, among others, by S. Epiphanius (*Her.*, lxix.), S. Ambrose (*De Fide*, v. 3), S. Augustin (*De Trinitat.*, i. 12), and S. Cyril (*Thesaurus*, x. 5). They answer the Arians in three ways. Some say that Christ spoke these words, not as God, but as man, as He spoke many others; *e.g.*, S. John xiv. 28: "The Father is greater than I". S. Augustin says that the word "Mine" does not mean power, but office, and that Christ did not mean that it was not in His power to do this but in His office, as He had not come upon earth to give away crowns but to incite to conflict. This may be so, but it does not appear to be the true meaning of the words. The true meaning of them is that expressed by S. Ambrose, S. Epiphanius, and S. Cyril, as above; by S. Chrysostom (*Hom.* lxvi.), and by S. Jerome in his *Commentary* (*in loc.*). They say that Christ does not deny that it is His power and office to give this, but that He will give it only to those for whom it is prepared by the Father. The sum is that there is no comparison between Christ and the Father, as the Arians suppose, as if the Father had power but the Son had not, but a comparison only between the persons to whom such honour should be given; which cannot be given to all, but only to those for whom it is prepared by the Father. This is the force of the word "you," as if Christ had said, "It is not Mine to give to you because you ask it, or because you are My kindred, and who have not yet merited it, but it will be given to those for whom it is prepared by My Father," that is, to those who have merited it, and, as explained by Remigius (*In S. Thomas*), "it will not be given to the proud and ambitious, which you are, but to the humble, for whom it is prepared by My Father".

"If a king," say the above Fathers, "gave a crown to the victor in the stadium, and held it in his hand, but one who had not only not conquered, but had not even run in the race for it, should ask it of him, the king would rightly

reply, 'You could have run, but the crown is not mine to give, but it is for those for whom it is prepared, that is, for those who have conquered'." The king would not say that he could not give it, as it was his, but that he ought not to give it except to the victorious, for whom he intended it. S. Cyril supposes another case. "If a man should ask something unjust of a just judge, the latter would rightly answer that he could not do it; not that he had not the power, but that he ought not to do it." Hence follows the great necessity of the word *vobis*, "to give to you," though it is not read in most Greek copies, nor is found in any ancient Greek author that I know of, nor is cited by S. Augustin (*De Trin.*, i. 12). It is enough that the ancient version has it, that S. Jerome and S. Ambrose read it, and that the sense requires it; but even if it were not found, the meaning would not be changed, for S. Chrysostom, S. Cyril, Theophylact, and Euthymius, who do not read it, agree in the same opinion.

Christ was so far, indeed, from meaning that it was not His office to distribute the rewards, that He rather declares that to do this was part of it; for when He said that it was not His to give to all, but to those who merited and were worthy of it, He showed that He would be the judge and the distributor of rewards, as in *S. John* v. 22; *S. Luke* xxii. 29, 30; and *S. Matt.* xix. 28. He promised the Apostles that they should sit with Him upon twelve seats as if He were about to grant them this. "Why, then," it will be said, "did He add, 'but for whom it is prepared by My Father,' as if He opposed Himself to the Father?" He did not say without reason, "It is not Mine to give, but My Father's"; but He said, "For whom it is prepared by My Father," not that He might have it supposed that He was not able to give it, but His Father was, but that He was not able to give it to others than those for whom it was prepared by His Father, as S. Chrysostom has rightly ob-

served. But why, then, did He say, "For whom it is prepared by My Father," rather than "by Me," as if He ascribed more power to His Father than to Himself? The answer is obvious. It was said by an attribution common in Scripture, in which, although all *opera externa*, as theologians say, are common to the Three Persons, yet some are attributed to one Person and some to another, as if proper and peculiar to them. Thus power and providence are ascribed to the Father, wisdom to the Son, grace and its gifts to the Holy Ghost ; because, therefore, *esse* is prepared, *esse* was predestinated. But predestination is a kind of providence which is ascribed to the Father rather than to the Son ; for we do not find in Scripture that the Son, or Holy Spirit, but that the Father alone, predestinates.

*For whom it is prepared.*

The explanation of S. Chrysostom, which Theophylact also approves, is wonderful—that this is given to none, man nor angel ; for no one can possibly come to sit on the right or left hand of Christ, who, as S. Paul says to the Ephesians (i. 20, 21), was placed at the right hand of the Father in the heavenly places, above all principality and power, and virtue and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come (*Ephes.* i. 20, 21). Wonderful also is the opinion of S. Hilary, who explains the passage of Moses and Elias, the one of whom will sit on the right, the other on the left. Wonderful that of Euthymius, "For whom it is prepared," that is, for SS. Peter and Paul, who laboured more than all. It is evident that Christ described no particular individuals, and regarded not persons, but merits.

Verse 24. *And the ten hearing it were moved with indignation against the two brethren.*

The Author and Euthymius think that the ten were not less ambitious than the others, because they were indignant



at the request. But S. Chrysostom piously excused them, because the Holy Ghost had not yet been poured into them, by whom all human vices of this kind are purged away.

Verse 25. *But Jesus called them to Him.*

It would appear that the two sons of Zebedee, with their mother, had come to Christ apart and secretly, that the other disciples might not know it, and asked the first place of honour, but the other Apostles either overheard their words, or conjectured from the answer of Christ what the two had asked, and were indignant, and began to murmur. Christ therefore called them, and taught them that He knew their thoughts and words, though unexpressed, and He corrected their indignation, as He had corrected the petitions of the others.

*You know.*

The meaning of Christ seems to be : "Do you not know that what you do is the act of ambitious rulers? and not of all these, but of those of the Gentiles, among whom not virtue, nor justice, nor dignity, but ambition, violence, tyranny, obtain kingdoms and principalities; and where the rulers seek what is useful and honourable, not for their people, but for themselves?" Such appears to be the opinion of Euthymius. Christ does not abrogate the authority of kings and princes, for S. Paul (*Rom.* xiii. 1; *Titus* iii. 1) and S. Peter (1, iii. 13, 14) teach that all power is of God, and that even a bad ruler is to be obeyed for His sake.

Much less does He take away the ecclesiastical authority by which S. Peter (*Acts* v. 5, 10) punished Ananias and Sapphira, and S. Paul (1 *Cor.* v. 5; 1 *Tim.* i. 20) gave over wicked men to Satan, and which He commended to S. Timothy (1, iv. 12). He only signifies that the Apostles, who are called to govern the Church, ought not to follow

the ambition and tyranny of the rulers of the Gentiles. Christ does not speak of any rulers whatever, but only of the Gentile princes, who were more cruel and ambitious than those of the Jews who were given by God and were restrained by His fear and worship. So S. Peter (1, v. 3) warns those who are over the Church not to oppress the clergy. Lastly, He would have the Apostles to be such as S. Paul describes himself (2 *Cor.* xii. 14, 15).

*Exercise power upon them.*

“Exercise power.” *Dominantur eorum. In eos.* A Grecism and Hebraism. Our version follows both—the former in reading *eorum* for *eos*, and the latter in adopting, not the grammatical, but the natural gender.

Verse 28. *And to give His life a redemption for many.*

Christ states here what good pastors of the Church ought to do ; for “the good shepherd layeth down his life for the sheep” (*S. John* x. 11).

There were, in S. Augustin’s time, a body of heretics, then called Predestinarians, who, like Calvin and his followers, held that Christ was not born and did not die for all men, but only for those who were to be saved, or the predestined. Godeschalcus, in the time of Lothario, in France, held this error. He was opposed by Hincmar, Bishop of Rheims. They founded their opinion on *S. Matt.* xxvi. 28 : “This is My blood of the New Testament, which shall be shed for many, unto remission of sins,” and *Heb.* ix. 28 : “Christ was offered once to exhaust the sins of many”.

But what can be plainer than the words of S. Paul (1 *Tim.* ii. 6 ; 2 *Cor.* v. 14, 15). But why did Christ here, and in *S. Mark* x. 45, not say that He came to give His life for the redemption of all, but for many ? Why did He say that He shed His blood for many, and why did

S. Paul say Christ was offered once to exhaust the sins of many? The reasons may be :

1. Either "many" is here used for "all," the part for the whole, as the Greeks use the word *πόλλοι* to express an infinite number, and the Latins *multitudo* to express all—*omnes*.

2. Or, more probably, Christ regarded, not His own will, but the fruit of His suffering. For, if we regard His will, He died for all men, without any single exception, as the Scriptures cited above demonstrate. But, if we consider the fruit of His death, He did not come for all, because all were not willing to share in it. So we see that Christ sometimes prayed for all, even for the reprobate and for those who crucified Him (*S. Luke* xxiii. 34), to show that He wished and would have all men to be saved. At other times He prayed only for the elect (*S. John* xvii. 9). This is how the question is answered by S. Jerome.

Verse 30. *And behold two blind men.*

It is doubtful whether S. Matthew describes the same events as that in *S. Mark* x. 46 and *S. Luke* xviii. 35. They relate the cure of three blind men by Christ near Jericho. Some, as Eustathius, think the history that of three different events, because S. Matthew speaks of two blind men, S. Mark and S. Luke of one ; and S. Mark says that he cast off his garments, and leaped up and came to Christ, of which the other Evangelists make no mention.

Others think the accounts histories of two events (*S. Augustin, De Consens.*, ii. 65, and *Quæst. Evangelic.*, ii. 48 ; Bede, Strabus, and De Lyra, *in loc.*). For what S. Matthew and S. Mark describe as one history, S. Luke describes as if it were a different one. The former two Evangelists say that the cure took place when Christ had gone out from Jericho ; but S. Luke says that Christ was drawing near that city. These accounts seem to the above authorities so diverse that they think it impossible that they can apply

to the same event. Theophylact seems to consider more rightly that the three accounts form one history. For all the events were so similar that it cannot be thought that they could have been different miracles. All the Evangelists say that it happened in the last journey from Galilee to Jerusalem ; all put it in the same place, the neighbourhood of Jericho ; all say that the blind man or men sat by the wayside by which Christ passed, and that all the men cried out in the same words, "Thou Son of David, have mercy on us" ; all were ordered by the crowd to hold their peace ; all cried out the more vehemently ; all say that Christ stood and called the blind men to Him, and that He asked them all the same question, "What will ye that I do to you?" There could not possibly have been so many similar circumstances in two or three different histories.

As to what S. Matthew says, that there were two blind men, and S. Mark and S. Luke only one, S. Augustin properly says that there were two, as S. Matthew says, but one was of higher rank than the other and better known, and therefore S. Mark and S. Luke mentioned him only. This conjecture is strengthened by the fact that S. Mark gives his name and that of his father, as if he were a man well known to all, calling him Bar, the son of Timæus. We have a similar expression in chap. viii. 28, where S. Matthew says that the two demoniacs were healed by Christ, in the region of the Gerasines, when S. Mark (v. 2) and S. Luke (viii. 27) speak only of one.

It is a more difficult question how S. Matthew (here) and S. Mark (x. 46) say that this happened when Christ was going out of Jericho, but S. Luke (xviii. 35) says that it was when He was approaching the city. The Greek will not admit the explanation of those who say that the words mean when He was going out thence, but was still near it, for the Greek is *ἐν τῷ ἐγγίξειν αὐτον εἰς Ἱερύχω*, when He was drawing nigh to Jericho to enter it.

Their conjecture appears much more probable, that the blind man of higher rank, of whom S. Mark and S. Luke make mention, when Christ was drawing near the city, sat down by the wayside and cried out to Christ as He passed by, "Jesus, thou Son of David, have mercy on me"; but Christ would not heal him then, that He might heal the other two afterwards at the same time. That the blind man again sat by the wayside, because he knew that Christ would go out that way, and he cried out again with the other in the same words, and that they were then called by Christ and healed. Nor is there any difficulty in the fact that S. Matthew and S. Mark say that the miracle was performed when Christ went out, and S. Luke when He drew near; nor in S. Mark's account of the blind man's casting away his garment, and in S. Matthew's relating that Christ touched his eyes, which the other Evangelists do not mention; for one Evangelist often relates a circumstance which the others pass over.

*Thou Son of David.*

Why Christ was so addressed, especially by those who sought some benefit from Him, has been explained in the Preface.

Verse 31. *And the multitude rebuked them that they should hold their peace.*

Not, we must believe, in any bad spirit, but in love, and with the desire that the men should not be troublesome to Christ by their clamour. So say The Author and Euthymius.

Verse 34. *Touched their eyes.*

Why Christ did this has been explained on chap. viii. 3. S. Mark, however, and S. Luke add that Christ said, "Thy faith hath made thee whole". How this is to be understood has been fully explained on chap. ix. 2.

## CHAPTER XXI.

CHRIST RIDES INTO JERUSALEM UPON AN ASS—HE CASTS  
THE BUYERS AND SELLERS OUT OF THE TEMPLE—  
CURSES THE FIG-TREE—AND PUTS TO SILENCE THE  
PRIESTS AND SCRIBES.

Verse 1. *And when they drew nigh to Jerusalem and were  
come to Bethphage.*

BETHPHAGE was situated at the foot of the Mount of Olives, close to Jerusalem (*S. Luke* xxi. 37). *S. Mark* (xi. 1) says : " When they were drawing near to Jerusalem and Bethania, at the Mount of Olives," &c. ; *S. Luke* (xix. 29) : " It came to pass when He was come nigh to Bethphage and Bethania, unto the mount called Olivet, He sent two of His disciples". Bethphage and Bethany were about equidistant from Jerusalem, for *S. Matthew* says : " When they drew nigh to Jerusalem and were come to Bethphage" ; and *S. Mark* : " When they were drawing near to Jerusalem and to Bethany". Bethphage was about a Sabbath day's journey from Jerusalem (*Acts* i. 12), which *Origen* states to have been one mile. Others think that it was two miles. *S. John* (xi. 18) says that it was fifteen furlongs distant. Christ most probably, when at Jerusalem, went at night to the Mount of Olives, as *S. Luke* says (xxi. 37) ; and He may have frequented the house of Mary the sister of Lazarus, which, as *S. John* (xii. 1) tells us, was in Bethany.

Verse 2. *An ass and a colt.*

S. Mark and S. John speak of the colt alone ; S. Matthew describes it as a she-ass, to state the whole event as it happened, and to show that the words of Zacharias (ix. 9) were fulfilled, who seems to speak not only of the colt but also of the ass ; the latter being perhaps mentioned to show that the colt was so young as not yet to have carried a rider, as described by S. Mark (xi. 2) and S. Luke (xix. 30) ; for colts are not separated from their dams until they can carry. The other Evangelists only mention the foal, because on this alone Christ sat.

Verse 4. *This was done.*

The meaning is twofold. It may be intended either :

1. To signify, not the cause, but the effect, as explained on chap. ii. 15, as if it were said that Christ did so that the prophecy of Zacharias might be fulfilled ; or,

2. To show the final cause, as if the Evangelist meant that Christ desired to enter Jerusalem on an ass, to show that the prophecy of Zacharias applied to Him. This appears more likely ; for S. Chrysostom and The Author say on this passage, “that it is not to be supposed that Christ chose to enter Jerusalem on an ass without a reason, or any signification of mystery, when He had never entered it so before”. His chief reason may have been, perhaps, to compel the Jews to acknowledge Him as the King and Messiah from that prophecy. For, as S. Chrysostom argues, what other king of the Jews ever entered Jerusalem on an ass of whom this prophecy could possibly be understood ? S. Chrysostom gives another reason : He did it to show the Apostles and all men an example of humility. The Author offers a third : that Christ wished by this act to cause enmity in the minds of the Jews against Him, that, now the time of His death was come, He might irritate them against Him and cause them to give Him over

to death ; as at other times, when His death was not near, He had been accustomed to deliver Himself out of their hands, as related by S. Luke (iv. 30). He also appears to have wished to place before the eyes of the Apostles the nature of His kingdom, which consisted of humanity.

*Verse 5. Tell ye the daughter of Zion.*

These words are not in *Zacharias*, but either the Evangelist added them in explanation, or he put into one the words of Zacharias and Isaiah (lxii. 11). The latter says : " Tell the daughter of Zion her Saviour cometh " ; Zacharias says : " Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion ; shout for joy, O daughter of Jerusalem. Behold, thy King will come to thee : the just and Saviour ; He is poor, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt, the foal of an ass " (ix. 9). S. Matthew did not cite all the words of the prophecy because, as shall be explained hereafter, they were not necessary ; nor did he follow the Hebrew version, but, as in many other places, that of the LXX.

*Daughters of Sion.*

This is a Hebraism, and a Synecdoche ; a Hebraism, as the city is termed " a daughter," an expression often found in the Sacred Writings and among the Greek poets. The Latins followed them, and frequently called their cities by the names of women. And a Synecdoche, as taking a part for the whole ; for Sion was a mountain on which only part of the city was built. The city was called Sion because the palace was on it. S. John cites the prophecy in other words (xii. 15), following the meaning rather than the words. For the Prophet says " Rejoice," and the Evangelist " Fear not " ; for he who rejoices does not fear.

*Behold thy king.*

The Prophet seems to point, as it were with his finger, to the long-expected Messiah, as now at hand, and before



their eyes. Although Zacharias used the future, it was no doubt according to the Hebrew idiom that he put that tense for the present. The LXX., knowing this, rendered the passage by the present, as S. Matthew has done: **בוא לך**.

*Cometh to thee.*

These words are to be taken together, as is clear from the Hebrew context: **יבוא לך** *veniet tibi*. The Prophet signifies to the daughter of Zion that her King is come to her—that is, He whom she has expected for so many ages. For he says that He was sent properly to the daughter of Zion—that is, the Jewish people ; for Christ had not come but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, as He had said (xv. 24). They, therefore, who join the words “to thee” to that which follows “meek,” as if He were meek to thee—not angry, not elated, not cruel—although they shoot well, shoot beyond the mark.

*Meek.*

The Hebrew is **עני** “pauper” ; but the LXX. converted it into **עני** “meek,” because they probably read **עני** and the Evangelist followed them, though with no prejudice to the meaning of the Prophet ; for the poor are mostly humble and meek, and the two words in Hebrew are derived from the same root.

*Sitting upon an ass, and a colt.*

A question arises here as to how Christ could sit both upon an ass and a colt. Some, as S. Jerome and Bede, think that the words must be understood allegorically ; others, that Christ not only sat upon both, but that He sat upon the ass first and the colt afterwards. This they regard as a mystery. They think the ass to have represented the Jews, on which Christ sat first, and the colt the Gentiles, to which He passed on when He had left the Jews ; so Theophylact, Strabus, and

others. But it is clear from the other Evangelists that Christ sat only on the colt ; both because they make no mention of the ass, and because SS. Mark and Luke show that *mysterii causa*, He would not sit on a female or even on a male ass, but only on a colt on which no man had ever sat. Whether this was because He desired to fore-show the Gentiles as being yet rude and unbroken, or that it did not become Him to sit on an ass on which other men had sat, or, as some think, that He might show His power in making an unbroken colt submit to Him.

There is another question, how S. Matthew seems not merely to intimate that Christ sat both on the ass and the colt, and not on one alone, but to state plainly that He did so. Some say that the Greek word ὄνος, although meaning both a male and female ass, should be rendered *asinum* and not *asinam* ; as if, by a repetition common among the Hebrews, who often express the same thing by different words, to show that there was only one animal, and not two, as if the Evangelist had said sitting upon an ass and a colt the foal of an ass, which had been broken to the yoke. The Hebrew word חמור *chamor*, used here by the Prophets, almost always means the male animal ; very seldom the female.

Euthymius is of this opinion, and it seems very probable ; but we should observe that S. Matthew speaks so as to leave no doubt that he meant to say that Christ sat upon a female ass, and a colt ; nor was it without reason that the word which in the Prophet is doubtful, and may be taken to mean either a male or female animal, is rendered by him without ambiguity by the latter ; especially as neither Jonathas the Chaldean Paraphrast nor the LXX. had so rendered it. Our version appears quite correct in using the word *asina* (female ass) ; for Christ, in verse 2, spoke of an ass and her colt where the Greek participle δεδεμένην, "bound," being in the feminine, removes all ambiguity.

I approve, therefore, the opinion of those who say that the Evangelist spoke by Synecdoche or Syllepsis, as we speak of one thing by the expression of more than one ; as when it is said that the Apostles murmured about the ointment, when it is clear that Judas alone did so ; and as we are told that the thieves at the Crucifixion railed, when another Evangelist says that only one did so. I think that the Evangelist said designedly *asinam*, and not *asinum*, and so spoke as to show that Christ seemed to have sat upon each, so that if a person should understand the Prophet in this sense, namely, that the coming King would sit on an ass and a colt both, he could not blame the Prophet as if the prophecy were not fulfilled in Christ. Why, then, did the Apostles spread their garments, not only upon the colt, but also upon the ass ? as is said in verse 7. Euthymius answers that it was because they did not know which of the two Christ would prefer—the ass or the colt. This is not probable, however, because when S. Mark and S. Luke say that Christ said to those whom He sent to loose the colt, “ You shall find the colt of an ass tied, on which no man hath ever sitten ” (*S. Luke* xix. 30), they could not be ignorant that Christ would choose to ride, not upon the ass, but upon the colt. We shall, therefore, answer the question better by saying that the Evangelist spoke, as in other cases, by Syllepsis.

Verse 7. *And made Him sit thereon.*

The word “ thereon,” *ἐπάνω αὐτῶν*, may apply either to the ass, or to the garments, as is observed by Euthymius and Theophylact.

Verse 8. *And a very great multitude.*

This multitude was composed of those who had followed Christ to Jerusalem for the sake of the miracles, as is clear from *S. John* xii. 12. The Apostles appear to have begun the rejoicing (*S. Luke* xix. 37).

Verse 9. *Hosanna to the Son of David.*

Many different meanings of these words have been given; some have taken them to be a mere exclamation of rejoicing or entreaty. S. Jerome to Damasus objects to S. Hilary's assertion that it means "Redemption of the house of David"; an idea which S. Ambrose (*On S. Luke* xix.) may be thought to have borrowed from him; each, as shall be shown by and by, was unjustly blamed. Others, as Euthymius, think that the words were a hymn, meaning "Praise to God". Others, again, understand by them, the boughs which the Jews used to carry on the feast of Tabernacles, crying, "Hosanna, Hosanna"; they who carried them being accustomed to cry "Hosanna," and the boughs themselves having gained the title of "Hosanna" from being thus carried. The Jews in memory of this custom are supposed to have now broken off the branches, and cried, "Hosanna," as if they had said, "Cut them off and give them to the Son of David".

But this seems questionable. Because it does not seem probable that the multitude would have been induced by the custom of tabernacles to carry branches before Christ, because He had no part in them; they being only carried to commemorate the time during which the Jews were dwelling in tents, and it is not to be supposed that the multitude, more especially when under the guidance of the Apostles, would have cut down branches from the trees without reason.

The opinion of S. Jerome, then, both on this passage and in his *Epistle to Damasus*, seems most probable, that Hosanna means only הוֹשִׁיעֵהָנָא "Preserve, I pray Thee"—*salvum fac obsecro*—and is taken from *Ps.* cxvii. 25.

But it is doubtful to whom, as the agent (*personam agentem*), and to whom as the object (*patiens*), the words apply. All ancient commentators seem to refer them to

Christ as the former, and to the multitude as the latter ; as if they said : " Save us, O Son of David ". S. Irenæus (iv. 24), Origen (*Tract. xv. on S. Matt.*), S. Hilary (*Can. xxi.*), S. Ambrose (*On S. Luke xix.*), S. Jerome and Bede (*in loc.*), S. Hilary, and S. Ambrose had this meaning when they said that " Hosanna " meant " Redemption of the house of David," as if the multitude which cried " Hosanna," that is, " Save, I beseech Thee," had professed by that word that Christ was come, as the Redeemer of the house of David.

But there is much to be urged against this view.

1. The multitude does not seem to have thought of Christ as the true God and Redeemer; as, on the other hand, they were not ignorant that the hymn of " Hosanna " was not sung but to the true God alone.

2. Because the words which immediately followed, " Blessed is He who cometh in the name of the Lord," are referred to Christ, not as the agent (*persona agens*), but as the one blessed, for they did not pray Christ to bless Himself, but that God would bless Him.

3. In the Psalm from which the words are taken, " Hosanna " is referred, not to Him " who cometh in the name of the Lord," but to God, and it is not to be supposed that the multitude, much less the Apostles, who went before, spoke the words in any other sense than that in which they were uttered by David.

4. The meaning does not agree, for what sense is there in saying, " Save us to the Son of David " (*Salva nos filio David*) ; and although some authorities, and S. Irenæus among them, read " O Son " (*fili* not *filio*), yet the texts of both the Greek and Latin versions unite in reading the dative and not the vocative.

5. If we follow this explanation, the question will arise, How we are to understand what immediately follows : " Hosanna in the highest "? For, what meaning is there

in "Save us, O Son of David, in the highest"? I entirely accept the opinion of the moderns, who say that the words should be referred to God as the agent, and to Christ as the object. For the people prayed to God to keep and prosper the new king so long wished for, as in *Psalms* xliv. 4, 5. David speaks of Christ: "Gird Thy sword upon Thy thigh, O Thou most mighty; with Thy comeliness and Thy beauty set out, proceed prosperously, and reign"; and as we are accustomed to pray for the prosperity of new kings, and to cry "*Vivat Rex*," and as the Jews of old did; as 1 *Kings* x. 24; 3 *Kings* i. 25, 39, 40, and many other like passages of Scripture show.

This "Hosanna," then, has the same meaning as *Vivat Rex*; and the people's carrying palm branches resembled the custom of their own and other nations, of carrying boughs of trees to celebrate victories and triumphs (1 *Machab.* xiii. 51).

The idea, therefore, of those who would refer the whole ceremony to the festival of Tabernacles, cannot be received. For in that feast the people carried branches, not in token of joy, but in commemoration. But this multitude carried them like those who are triumphant and rejoicing. It is clear, besides, that all who take this view must wholly do away with the mystery of this remarkable act. Nor can we doubt that the multitude acted by no blind and unreasoning impulse, but by deliberate design or, more probably, divine impulse, that all might understand that what David said of the future Messiah was fulfilled in Christ. A strong argument for this opinion is seen in verse 15, when even infants are said to have cried out in the same words. They could only have done this by divine influence; not by custom or any human design, so that they did not now cry out *Vivat Rex*, but, in its place, "Hosanna".

But it will be objected that this explanation is at variance with the Greek and Latin construction; for when the

multitude prayed God to keep Christ, it did not say, "Hosanna to the Son" (*Filio*), but "Hosanna the Son" (*Filium*) of David. The reply is that this is a Hebraism which both the Greek and Latin follow. For the Hebrew word **שׁוּבָה** is found not only with the accusative, but also with the dative case, as in *Deut.* xxii. 27; *Joshua* x. 4; *Judges* vii. 2; *1 Kings* xxv. 26; *Ps.* xliii. 4; lxxxv. 16.

*Blessed is He that cometh.*

That is, May His coming be blessed, as cited before from *Ps.* xliv. 5.

*In the name of the Lord.*

These words mean not only one who was sent by God, but also one who bore the person of God, who through him visited His people. S. Mark adds (xi. 10): "Blessed be the kingdom of our father David that cometh, Hosanna in the highest". The repetition of the word "Hosanna" is the result of strong feeling. One of the best explanations of "Hosanna in the highest" seems to be that the Greek pronoun *ὁ* should be understood after "Hosanna *qui es in altissimis*," an example of which ellipsis is found in *Ps.* cxlviii. 1. But this seems a hard and unusual explanation. A still better may be that the word *ἐν* is put for *ἐκ*, as in Hebrew **ב** for **מִן** (*Exod.* xii. 43; *Levit.* viii. 32; *2 Paralip.* xvi. 6; and in *Ps.* cxlviii. cited by others). "Praise the Lord, praise Him, *de cælis in excelsis*," as if it had been said *de excelsis*. It is clearly a repetition and a Hebraism. The LXX. and S. Jerome follow it and read "*in*" for "*de*" *altissimis*, for they ask God to keep the new king *de cælo*—that is, from heaven, divinely, wonderfully. Hence we see how S. Luke's saying (xix. 38) that the multitude cried out, "*Pax in Cælo et gloria in excelsis*" ("Peace in heaven and glory in the highest"), is not opposed to his words (chap. ii. 14). For there the angels announced, Glory to God, peace to men: here the multitude pray for glory and peace

to Christ, *in excelsis*, that is, *ab excelsis*, and from God. For S. Luke puts *ἐν* for *ἐκ*, and *in* for *de*.

Verse 10. *The whole city was moved.*

It is not to be believed to the letter that every individual person in the city was moved, but at least the greater part of the city was so; *e.g.*, the Scribes, Pharisees and priests, who were the chief people in authority. In like manner, the Evangelist says (chap. ii. 3), that the whole city was moved by the arrival of the Magi. But the city was not moved now by joy, or wonder, or fear, but by envy and malignity, at seeing Christ received with such honour; as the following words seem to signify.

*Who is this?*

They were not ignorant who Christ was, for they had known Him now three years. They meant, Who is He that He should receive so much honour? So the men of Nazareth had said: "Is not this the carpenter's son" (chap. xiii. 55).

*And the people.*

That is, the multitude which followed Him, not the people of Jerusalem. S. Matthew opposes the multitude who followed Christ to the citizens of Jerusalem. The latter asked in contempt and envy, "Who is this?" the former answered in faith, "This is Jesus the Prophet from Nazareth". The word "prophet" here does not include any prophet whatever, but that Messiah promised of old, and long expected. This is clear from the preceding acclamation, "Hosanna," and "Blessed is He," &c. For the Messiah had been promised, not only under the name of a King, but also of a Prophet (as in *Deut.* xviii. 15), which S. Peter (*Acts* iii.) and S. Stephen (vii. 37) explain of Christ.

*Of Nazareth.*

Christ had three places of abode—Bethlehem, in which He was born; Nazareth, in which He was brought up; and



Capernaum, in which He mostly lived—as has been explained on chap. ix. 1.

Verse 12. *And Jesus went into the Temple of God.*

It is not quite clear when Christ entered the Temple. Some say that He rode through the city on the ass and went directly into the Temple. Others say that it was not on the same day as that on which He entered the city, but the day after, as S. Mark seems to imply (chap. xi. 15), and that S. Matthew mentioned the entrance by anticipation. Others think that He entered the Temple on the same day as that on which He entered the city, and that S. Mark has not kept the order of events, but, as a recapitulation, relates on the following day what happened on the day previous. This is the opinion of S. Augustin (ii. 67, *De Consens.*), and he supports it from verse 17: "And leaving them He went out of the city into Bethania and remained there". In these words the Evangelist indicates that Christ, before He went out of the city to go to Bethany, held the disputation related by S. Matthew and S. Mark with the priests; though S. Mark mentions it as having taken place on the second day, when Christ had returned from Bethany to Jerusalem again.

Others, to harmonise SS. Matthew and Mark, say that Christ entered the Temple on both days. This is very probable, because whenever Christ was in Jerusalem He went into the Temple; but it is not to the purpose (*abs re*), because the Evangelists designed to speak not of every entrance of Christ into the Temple, but only of the particular one in which the events related by them took place, when the children who were in the Temple cried out "Hosanna," and the priests asked Christ if He heard what they said. It is probable that this was done, not on the second day, but on the first; and, therefore, the opinion of S. Augustin appears to be much more likely, for S. John

has given a similar account (xii. 14, 15). And it is very probable, as S. Chrysostom, S. Augustin, and Euthymius think, that this is a similar account, but not the same, and that Christ twice cast out the buyers and sellers from the Temple.

When Christ is said to have entered the Temple, the first part of it must be understood, which is called "The Hall" and "Solomon's Porch". Here Christ used to teach and to walk (*S. John* x. 23); for this part was common to all (*Acts* iii. 11; verses 11, 12). For into the other two parts the priests alone entered, as S. Paul says (*Heb.* ix. 6, 7). It was in the hall of the Temple that the buyers and sellers took their stations.

*That sold.*

This passage cannot be better explained than by the words of S. Jerome. "We must remember," he says, "in the first place, that according to the commands of the law in the Temple of the Lord, the most august in the world, an innumerable number of victims was offered up by the Jewish people who flocked into it from almost all parts of the world, and most especially on the Jewish festivals—bulls, rams, goats—the poorer classes offering the young of doves and turtles that they might not be without sacrifices. For it very frequently happened that such as came from a distance had no victims to offer. The priests then considered how they could make a profit out of the people, and sell all the animals required for sacrifice in such a manner as both to dispose of them to those who had none, and, when sold, to get possession of them again themselves. This artifice, however, was often defeated by the poverty of the strangers, who were of the indigent classes, and not only had no sacrificial victims, but were even in want of the means of purchasing birds and the more humble kinds of offerings. Accordingly they placed money-changers to lend money under security; but, because it was forbidden

by the law to take usury, and money lent which had no percentage of interest brought no profit, and they sometimes lost their capital, they thought of another plan, and made 'Colybistæ' instead of money-changers. The meaning of this word is not expressed in Latin, but it has the same meaning as the Greek word *tragemata*, offerings of no value. Such are parched peas, dried grapes, and apples of different kinds. The Colybistæ, therefore, who were not allowed usury, and who lent money at interest, received different kinds of articles in return in the place of usury, so that what they could not gain in money they gained by such things as are procured by money." The only doubt about this account of S. Jerome is whether the custom was really originated by the priests.

*And overthrew the chairs of them that sold doves.*

It may be asked why the Evangelist did not say that Christ overthrew the seats of the money-changers rather than of those who sold doves, as the former would be more likely to use seats than the latter. The answer may be, that the Evangelist desired to describe the greater and to pass over the less; and, as with regard to the money-changers, it was a greater thing to overturn their tables with their money than their seats. S. Matthew, therefore, mentioned the former and not the latter.

Many have wondered why the money-changers, and that class of avaricious men, offered no resistance to Christ. S. Jerome well says: "Many have thought that the greatest miracles were the raising of Lazarus from the dead; the making a man, blind from His birth, to see; the voice of the Father being heard at the Jordan; Christ's showing His pride and glory in His Transfiguration on the mount. To me, among all the others, it seems more wonderful that, as one Man, and He at the time contemptible and so vile as to be subsequently crucified, with

the Scribes and Pharisees raging against Him, and seeing their gains destroyed, He could by the stripes of His single scourge cast out so great a multitude, overthrow the tables, break the seats, and do other things, which a whole army could not have done. For something of fire and of the sidereal flashed from His eyes, and the majesty of His Divinity shone in His face."

Verse 13. *It is written.*

(*Jeremiah* vii. 11.) What Jeremiah said of the men of his own time, Christ applied to these money-changers and sellers of doves, as (xv. 8) the prophecy is not interpreted, but applied to individual persons.

Verse 16. *Out of the mouths of infants.*

It is doubtful whether the children who so cried were actually infants or children of a somewhat more advanced age, who heard the multitude cry, "Hosanna to the Son of David," and imitated them. S. Hilary, The Author, and Strabus think that they were children and not infants. S. Chrysostom, Euthymius, and Theophylact, that they were really and strictly infants. This seems more probable, both because this would greatly augment the glory of Christ, and because the words have this meaning. Christ also seems to speak in this sense when He says, "If these shall hold their peace the very stones will cry out" (*S. Luke* xix. 40).

*Thou hast perfected praise.*

*Κατήρτισω αἶνον.* Thou hast attained to perfect praise. In the same sense, David says, "Thou hast perfected praise" (*Ps.* viii. 3)—that is, Thou hast made it firm, perpetual, immortal, as there explained. David from humbleness called himself a babe and suckling, out of whose mouth, as it gave thanks for the victory over Goliath, God

gained great praise, as the words immediately following show: "That thou mayest destroy the enemy and the avenger"—that is, "Because thou hast destroyed him," this being the meaning of the Hebrew. It should be observed that by this application of the words to Himself, Christ declares His Divinity. For what David said to God, He explains as said to Himself.

*Verse 17. And leaving them.*

"Them"—that is, the chief priests and Scribes—who are spoken of in verse 15. There are various opinions as to the reason of Christ having left them. The Evangelist seems to signify that there was on His part some fixed and not slight reason for what He did, or S. Matthew would not have said, "He left them and went out," but it would have been sufficient merely to say that He returned to Bethany, for He had His dwelling there. The words "leaving them" seem to show that He left them for their own good. S. Chrysostom, The Author, and Euthymius say that He left them that they might not seize Him before His time. Theophylact, because they were not worthy of His presence. Either reason is more probable than that of S. Jerome, Bede, and Strabus, that because He was poor, He could find no hospitality in the city. It is incredible that no one would have received Him into his house, when so many believed in Him.

*Verse 18. He was hungry.*

Some think that Christ was not really hungry, as it was morning, but that He pretended to be so to work a miracle, as Euthymius (and perhaps S. Augustin) thinks. This is very probable. For, as will be shown, He feigned to look for figs on the fig-tree, when He knew that it had none. Certainly, if He had been really hungry, S. Chrysostom seems to judge rightly that it was not with a natural

hunger, but with one assumed voluntarily, to give cause for the miracle, as (in chap. viii. 24) the storm on the lake was not a natural storm, but one caused by His will, that He might have occasion to put forth His power of ruling the winds and the sea, and so to show His Divinity.

Verse 19. *And found nothing on it.*

It is not wonderful that Christ found no fruit, for, as S. Mark says (xi. 13), the time of figs was not yet. It was the eleventh day of March, as the Evangelists clearly show. Calvin says preposterously that Christ looked for fruit, as not knowing what the tree was, and thinking at a distance that it was some other kind of tree, such as might have had ripe fruit. Christ could not have been ignorant what kind of tree it was, and that no tree could give ripe fruit at that time of year. To use the language of Calvin for a moment—that Christ did not know the tree—why did He curse it when He saw that it was a fig-tree, which could not then have ripe fruit? Christ, therefore, spoke as He did, designedly, knowing both that it was a fig-tree and that it had no fruit, but pretending, *more hominum*, that He was looking for fruit which He knew that He should not find—acting thus either to give occasion for the miracle, as S. Augustin (*Quæst. Evang.*, ii. 5), and S. Chrysostom and Euthymius (*in loc.*) suppose, or perhaps to set forth the mystery which shall shortly be explained.

There is another question. Why did Christ curse the fig-tree, and make it wither away, as if in punishment because it had no fruit at a time when it could not have had any? as S. Mark says, as if to excuse the tree. For it was not the time for figs (xi. 13). He acted, then, not in a fit of anger, which could not affect Him, nor to bring punishment on a tree which could not have deserved such, nor have felt it if it had; but only to declare a mystery, as Origen, in his *Tract. on S. Matt.* xvii., and SS. Hilary and Jerome suppose.

The mystery is that the Synagogue was the tree planted by God in His own vineyard, from which He had often sought fruit, but on which He had never found any, as is said *Isaiah* v. 2, and by the parable of the other fig-tree in *S. Luke* xiii. 6, 7. As that one, therefore, was cut down, so now Christ withered up this one ; that is, He did away with the Law and the Synagogue, because they bore the fruits of no good works ; as Christ teaches in the other parable of the vineyard soon after, in verse 33—the conclusion, in verse 43, being : “The kingdom of God shall be taken from you and given to a nation yielding the fruits thereof”. Christ shows that it should be given to the Gentiles because they would bring forth the fruits of it, and taken away from the Jews because they had brought forth none ; rather, they had slain the only son and heir of the lord of it.

It will be said that it was shown by the tree that the time was not come when the Synagogue should bring forth fruit. “For it was not the time of figs.” The fig-tree was not withered away for this reason, but because Christ only desired by that act without words to show that He could wither up the Synagogue because it did not bear fruit, as the Synagogue had borne none. In that point only, therefore, which Christ desired to teach, ought the fig-tree to be compared to the Synagogue—neither of them had any fruit. But no comparison should be instituted on those points on which Christ did not raise a comparison between them ; as that because it was not the time when the fig-tree should have had fruit, therefore it was not yet the time for the Synagogue to bring forth good works. For there is this difference between trees and men—that trees by their nature can only give fruit at a certain time of the year, but men ought to do good works all through their lives.

Our whole life is a summer ; it ought all to be full of fruit, nor does anything but our own will make it sterile.

Verse 20. *And the disciples seeing it.*

On the following day, which was the third from that on which He entered Jerusalem, and when He was going up to Jerusalem from Bethany; as is plain from *S. Mark* xi. 20.

Verse 21. *And stagger not.*

*Μὴ κατακρίθητε.* Do not dispute like those who are in doubt about a point (*Acts* x. 17; *Rom.* iv. 20).

Verse 24. *I also will ask you.*

Christ did not answer the question of the priests, lest He should excite them more against Him by the truth; but He proposed another question for them to answer. For they could not answer that the baptism of John was from heaven, because they would have been compelled to admit by the testimony of all men that Christ performed all His acts, not by human, but by divine, authority; for John had said of Him, "Behold the Lamb of God, behold Him who taketh away the sins of the world" (i. 29). By the baptism of John, Christ means not his mere baptism alone of men by water, but his whole profession, teaching, preaching, and doctrine, as the whole Law of Moses is expressed by the word "circumcision" (*Gal.* v. 3).

Verse 27. *Neither do I tell you.*

He does not answer as they did, "I know not," for He could not with truth. He said, "but neither," and therefore the particle *nec*, which usually expresses similitude, does so here, not to that which was said, namely, *nescimus*, but to that which was understood or which follows; that is, because they did not answer Christ as to whence was the baptism of John, so neither did Christ tell them by what authority He performed His works.

Verse 28. *A certain man had two sons.*

The priests would not answer Christ lest they should



be compelled to admit the authority of Christ ; for they knew that the baptism of John was from God, not men. What Christ would not reply to them then, He now puts into a parable : showing that John's baptism was from heaven, and that they were without excuse, because when the publicans and harlots believed on John, and listened to his preaching, and brought forth penance, they would do neither. The parable to the end of the 32nd verse is easy. The father of the two sons was undoubtedly God ; who the sons were is more of a question. The Ancients agree with wonderful unanimity that they were the Gentiles and the Jews. The former, when commanded by God to labour in the vineyard, by the natural law, replied that he would not ; for he would not observe that law. But he afterwards repented and went into the vineyard ; that is, he received not only the natural law, but also the evangelical law, and kept them. The Jew, on the other hand, when ordered by God to go into the vineyard, that is, to keep the Law, answered that he would go, as in *Exodus* xix. 8, but afterwards he went not, that is, he did not obey the Law. So say Origen (*Tract. xviii. on S. Matt.*), S. Athanasius (*Quæst.* 39), S. Chrysostom, The Author, S. Jerome, Bede, and Euthymius (*in loc*). But the parable, which ends at verse 31, probably shows two kinds of men of the Jews. The first : the people and publicans, harlots and sinners, who were commanded by God to labour in His vineyard, that is, to observe the Law, answered, not in words but in deeds, that they would not, because they did not do so. Afterwards, moved by the example and preaching of John, they repented, and not only observed the ancient law, but also received the new evangelical one.

The second class was the priests and Pharisees, who, when ordered to labour in the vineyard, answered that they would go, that is, they professed obedience to the Law, and a close and perfect one ; but, in fact, they went

not, because they in no way kept the Law, nor believed in John, of whom, as Christ Himself declares (verses 31, 32), the Prophets had spoken. It is credible, at the same time, that Christ also obscurely and indirectly pointed at the people of Jews and Gentiles. For the publicans and harlots seem to form an exact image of the Gentiles, and the priests, Scribes, and Pharisees of the Jews; and we see in another place that Christ, by another parable of two sons, showed the people of Gentiles and Jews (*S. Luke* xv. 20).

Verse 31. *The publicans and the harlots shall go into the kingdom of God before you.*

Christ, by these words, seems to show that even the priests with whom He was speaking should go into the kingdom of God, as Origen explains it. It is as if Christ meant, not, indeed, these very men with whom He was conversing, but other priests to the end of the world; for, as S. Paul says, "the fulness of the Gentiles shall come in, and they (the Jews) shall be converted and enter into the kingdom of God" (*Rom.* xi. 25, 26). But this does not appear to have been the meaning of Christ, but rather the contrary, that the priests were not to enter into that kingdom. He says that the publicans and harlots go before, not that the priests follow, but that as they were teachers of the Law, and ought to go before, they not only do not this but will not even follow, as He said (viii. 11, 12). What appears to be the meaning of the passage is: "They go before you into the kingdom of heaven"—that is, they show you the way, they give you an example; as explained in the following verse: "I say unto you, that many shall come from the east and the west, and shall sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven; but the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into the exterior darkness".

Verse 32. *But you also see it.*

That is, when you saw the example of the publicans and

harlots who believed in John, and brought forth penitence, you were not aroused, even by their example, either to believe or to repent; and thus, probably, it is written, not *in regno*, ἐν, but *in regnum*, εἰς. τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ Θεοῦ.

*For John came to you.*

Christ now answers what the priests had refused to answer, and declares that John was sent from God, and that his baptism was from God, not from man.

*In the way of justice.*

This is a Hebraism, that is, *per modum justitiæ*, bearing justice *per se*: having the life of a just man. Christ appears not to speak so much of true and inward righteousness (though this of John's was most true), as of that which alone seemed such to the priests, and which consisted of outward things alone: dress, fasts, and other like things, which were in John in a remarkable degree—as said in chap. xi. 18: "For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, He hath a devil". When, then, John especially displayed this righteousness, which the priests thought the sole or chief righteousness, they had no excuse for their unbelief.

*Did not even afterwards repent, that you might believe him.*

Christ reprehends the priests for two things: (1) Unbelief: from which they did not believe John as His messenger; and (2) Stubbornness and obstinacy: from which, when they had seen the publicans and harlots believe, they would not believe themselves. This is the meaning of the words, "did not even afterwards repent," that is, not even after you had seen their example would you change your opinion.

Verse 33. *Hear ye another parable.*

S. Matthew says that Christ proposed this parable to the same priests; S. Luke (xx. 9), to the people. It has been

explained that Christ puts it forth first to the priests with whom He was conversing, but because the people came round Him in numbers to listen, S. Luke says that He addressed it to the people. It must be borne in mind, that, as in all the parables, the necessary and peculiar parts must be carefully distinguished from the adjuncts, and what may be termed the accidental parts. In this parable, to verse 46, there appear to be six peculiar and necessary parts.

1. The man who planted a vineyard, who was, beyond doubt, God.

2. The vineyard itself which he planted. S. Athanasius (*Quæst.* 49) explains it of the world which God has created ; S. Irenæus (iv. 70), of the whole race of man ; but if so, who were the husbandmen to whom it was let out ? Others, more correctly, assert it to have been the Church in which God would have men labour. The metaphor is a common one in Scripture ; as in *Ps.* lxxix. 6 ; *Isa.* v. 2 ; *Jer.* ii. 21 ; xii. 10 ; *Joel* i. 7. God is said to have planted the vineyard when He gave the Law, because He in a manner planted the knowledge of Himself in men's minds through the Law ; as S. Augustin says (*Serm.* lix. *de Verb. Dom.*).

3. He made a hedge round it, and put a wine-press in it, and built a tower, which three things appear to form a part of one whole ; and they mean merely that God did for His Church all that was necessary, that it might be well protected and cultivated, as is said by Isaiah (v. 4). For Christ described only what the owners of vineyards do that the labourers may want nothing for good cultivation of them and for rendering the fruits when due. For they who plant vineyards first hedge it round, that wild animals and thieves may not break into it ; then they make a wine-press, to collect and press out the vintage ; lastly, they build a tower, partly for ornament, and partly that the vine-dresser may see that no one breaks in.

Ancient authors, indeed, assert that the three requisites have each its own meaning. Many explain the hedge to mean the protection of God and the angels, as Origen (*Tract. on S. Matt. xix.*), S. Ambrose (*On S. Luke xx.*), The Author, S. Jerome (*in loc.*); so too in *Ps. lxxix. 13*: "Why hast thou broken down the hedge thereof, so that all they that pass by the way do pluck it?" God is said to have destroyed the hedge, because He had taken away the help by which He used to protect and defend it, and, as it were, had deserted it, as in verse 15. Others say that the hedge is the names of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, by which the Jews were distinguished from the Gentiles (S. Hilary, *Can. xxii.*). Others think it the Law and precepts by which the Jews were hedged in as within certain limits; so S. Irenæus (iv. 70) and The Author (*Hom. xl.*). The press is by some said to be the altar which overflowed with the blood of the victims, like must (Origen, S. Jerome, Bede, Euthymius, and Theophylact). By others it is thought to be the spirit of the Prophets, which was agitated like must (SS. Irenæus, Hilary, Ambrose, and Jerome). The Author says that it is the Church; S. Athanasius (*Quæst. 49*) that it is baptism, which seems the least probable of all, as Christ was speaking, not of the Church of the Gospel, but of the Synagogue of the Jews, in which there was either no baptism at all or it could not have been figured by the wine-press. Very many, as Origen, S. Jerome, Bede, and Theophylact, explain the tower, of the Temple of Jerusalem; some, as S. Irenæus, of the city, which was built on one side on a mountain; a few, as S. Ambrose, S. Luke (xx.), The Author, S. Jerome (*in loc.*), say that it is the breadth of the Law.

4. The husbandmen. Many think these the priests alone with the Scribes and Pharisees, by whom the vineyard was to be cultivated, that is, the people were to be instructed; so Origen, S. Hilary, The Author, Euthymius, and Theo-

phylact. In confirmation of this opinion Christ disputed with the priests alone, and directed the parable against them ; while the rest of the people of the Jews would appear to have been not so much the husbandmen as the vineyard. From the conclusion of the parable, we see that not only the priests but the whole nation of the Jews were meant by the husbandmen, because Christ concluded that the vineyard should be taken from the Jews and given to other husbandmen, that is, to the Gentiles. Such is the explanation of S. Ambrose. God is said to have given the vineyard to the husbandmen, because to those who laboured in it He had promised the certain reward of eternal life, as in the similar parable in the preceding chapter. Thus even from the mere *locatio verborum*, rage the heretics as they will, the merits of good works is proved.

5. The fifth point is the servants whom the Lord of the vineyard sent at different times to collect the fruits. All authorities are agreed that these, as is evident from the words of Christ Himself, were the ancient Prophets. How some of these were slain and others stoned may be read in *Heb. xi.* and S. Jerome's *Comment. (in loc.)*.

6. The sixth is the son. That he was Christ even the priests themselves, against whom the parable was directed, could not be ignorant of.

These things have a peculiar and necessary meaning ; the other points are accidental, and should not be made any part of the essence of the parable. Such as these are the hedge, the press, the tower, the departure of the lord of the vineyard for the strange country, which is thought by S. Chrysostom, Theophylact, and Euthymius to signify the long-enduring patience of God towards the Jews. S. Jerome and Bede, however, think that they still had their free-will left to labour or not as they chose, as men of that class in the absence of their master usually have. This part of the parable may not appear to have any fixed and

necessary application, but it may have been added to fill up and set off the parable. Otherwise, the opinion of Origen (*Tract. on S. Matt.* xix.) and Theophylact seem the best. They say that the lord of the vineyard, that is, God, went away into a strange country because, when He appeared to the Jews at Sinai to plant His vineyard among them, that is, to appoint the Law, and make a covenant with them to keep it, He afterwards ceased to appear, as if He had gone to a far country. The adjective part is, that it is said in the parable that the time of the fruits drew near: as if it were not always the time of fruits, or as if God did not always require the fruit of good works from the Jews.

Again, what is said, "They will reverence my son," is said, not as being necessary to the meaning of the parable, but because it was probable that the lord of the vineyard, when he sent his son, would say so. S. Chrysostom, Euthymius, and Theophylact read: "It may be that they will reverence my son," as *S. Luke* xx. 13. They think that this was said that the lord of the vineyard might show the husbandmen what they ought to do, and not as if he were ignorant that they would not reverence his son; and that they might not say that they were compelled by the divine prophecy. But, doubtless, all these things were said as if of man, not as if of God. For the man could not know that the husbandmen would kill his son. He ought rather to have believed that they would reverence him.

Verse 41. *They say to Him, He will bring these evil men to an evil end.*

S. Mark (xii. 9) and S. Luke (xx. 16) say that these words were spoken, not by the priests, but by Christ. On the contrary, S. Luke says that the priests answered, "God forbid," as if they denied and detested what Christ said. S. Augustin (*De Cons.*, ii. 70) answers that these words were

spoken by the priests, as S. Matthew says, but because they were true, and what was and is true comes from the truth, and Christ was the Truth, the other two Evangelists ascribe these words to Christ. This may appear forced. What S. Chrysostom and Euthymius say seems, therefore, more probable : that these words, as S. Matthew writes them, were first said by the priests ; but that Christ confirmed and explained them, so that the priests might see and understand that He was speaking against them, and desired to signify that God would destroy them as evil husbandmen, and give their vineyard to other husbandmen. Moreover, S. Mark and S. Luke ascribe these words to Christ, and that the priests then answered in the words of S. Luke, "God forbid," *Absit* (xx. 16).

Verse 42. *Have you never read.*

Christ upbraids the priests who professed the knowledge of the Law with their ignorance of it, as He had done before (verse 16 ; xii. 3-5 ; xix. 4). He proves by another metaphor, and by the testimony of Scripture, that what the priests hated, saying, "*Absit*," would come to pass. Thus if S. Luke had not written that word, this passage would not have seemed to harmonise well with the preceding text ; but now, as S. Augustin (*De Cons.*, ii. 70) has observed, it does so well. For because the priests had said, "God forbid" (*Absit*), denying that what Christ had said would come to pass, He proves the contrary : because the stone which they, the builders, had refused was made the head of the corner, and whosoever fell upon it would be broken, but upon whom it falls it shall grind him to powder. Christ, as in other places, suddenly changes His metaphor ; for the Church which He had before compared to a vine He now compares to a building which God has built, as does S. Paul (1 *Cor.* iii. 9 ; 2 *Cor.* xiii. 10 ; and *Ephes.* ii. 21 ; iv. 12), and those whom He had before called husbandmen



He now calls builders ; Him whom He had before called the Son He now calls a Stone, as S. Jerome and Euthymius have observed. It is a customary metaphor in Scripture to call Christ a Stone (*Isa.* xxviii. 16 ; *Dan.* ii. 34 ; *Zach.* iii. 9). Christ is the Stone hewed out of the mountain without hands. Christ is called a Stone, in respect of the Church, as having a firm foundation, as S. Paul says (1 *Cor.* iii. 11 ; *Eph.* ii. 20). Nor is it doubtful that David (*Ps.* cxvii. 22, whence this text is taken) spoke of Christ and called Him the Stone, which not even these priests themselves, the enemies of Christ, could deny.

*The stone.*

The stone, *lapidem*, is put by a Hebraism, which the Septuagint (*Ps.* cxvii. 22), and the Greek interpreter of S. Matthew, and the Latin have followed : for λίθος and *lapis* in *quem* is read for *lapis quem*.

*Which the builders rejected.*

This is also a Hebraism in which the participle οἰκοδομοῦντες, *ædificantes*, is put for the substantive—*ædificantes* for *ædificatores*. It has been a question as to who are the men called builders by Christ, and by David before Christ. S. Chrysostom, Euthymius, and Theophylact think that it meant the priests alone, because they were in a manner the architects of the ancient Synagogue, and built it ; that is, they taught : for to build is to teach, as *Jer.* i. 10, and as S. Paul speaks (*Rom.* xv. 20 ; 1 *Cor.* iii. 10 ; *Gal.* ii. 18 ; *Ephes.* ii. 20), who calls himself an architect of the Gospel (1 *Cor.* iii. 10). S. Peter seems to allude to this passage (*Acts* iv. 11) : “ This is the stone which was rejected by you the builders ”. Others think that all the Jews together are meant ; because all, though not each one in particular, “ rejected ” Christ ; that is, threw aside, as useless and without value for the building, as the wicked say in *Wisdom* ii. 12 : “ Let us therefore lie in wait ”.

*The same is become the head of the corner.*

Christ is called the head of the corner for three reasons :

1. First, because it is the strongest stone of the whole building, and that which holds together and supports all the others, as S. Peter says (*Acts* iv. 11) where he opposes the head of the corner to reprobation, and as Isaiah (xxviii. 16) calls the precious stone, *honorem injuriæ* ; that is, the stone which is placed in the most honourable position. In the same sense S. Paul says to the Ephesians (ii. 20) : “ You are built upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner-stone,” explaining the highest and first on which all the others depend to be the chief corner-stone.

2. Because it is a stone of offence to many. For corner-stones often stand out from the building, so that careless passengers are apt to strike against them in passing, as the Jews did against Christ. So S. Peter (*1 Epist.* ii. 7, 8). In the same sense S. Paul wrote to the Romans (ix. 32, 33).

3. Because He unites the Jews and Gentiles into one among themselves, as S. Paul says (*Eph.* ii. 14). This explanation is followed by almost all the Ancients: Origen (*Tract. in Matt.* xix.) ; S. Hilary (*Can.* xxii.) ; S. Augustin (*On Ps.* lxxxviii. and cxix., and *Tract. in Johan.*, and *Serm.* xviii., xlix., *de Verb. Dom.*) ; S. Jerome, Theophylact, Bede, and Euthymius (*in loc.*).

Christ seems to have united all these senses in Himself :

1. Because He signifies that though rejected by the Jews He would be held in the greater honour by the Gentiles.

2. Because He foretold that the Jews would dash against Him and be broken : as He said, *Qui ceciderit*, “ Whoever shall fall ”.

3. He showed that He would make this a gain, for from being rejected by one people He would have two instead of one, that is, as the corner-stone unites and connects two walls of a house.

*By the Lord this has been done.*

It is said to have been done by the Lord, because it was done by the Lord alone, not by human design ; that when the Jews did not believe, the Gentiles should do so ; as is shown by the grafting of the wild into the good olive-tree, as described at length and with great skill by S. Paul (*Rom. xi.*).

*And it is wonderful in our eyes.*

It justly seemed wonderful to the Jews, in whose person this was said by David, that the grace of Christ should be given not only to the Jews, but, when they had wickedly rejected it, much more abundantly to the Gentiles. For even S. Peter himself, now made to be the chief of the Apostles, did not understand it (*Acts x. 14*), nor possibly could have understood it, except the sheet had been let down from heaven, filled with all kind of animals, to teach him.

Verse 43. *The kingdom of God shall be taken from you.*

This is the conclusion of the parable, by which is signified the abolition of the Synagogue and the transference of the Church of God, which is here called the kingdom of God, and is described above as the vineyard, to the Gentiles, as SS. Paul and Barnabas said to the Jews.

*Yielding the fruits thereof.*

To advance which the vine was planted, and to collect which the servants were sent by the Lord. When it is said, " Shall be given to a nation yielding the fruits thereof," it is not that merit is meant, but the cause of its being given to the Gentiles, that they would yield the fruits of it, that is, would cultivate it well and render the fruits to the owner. Indirectly, the sin of the Jews is noted for which it was taken from them, namely, that they did not render the fruits of it. S. Paul uses similar language to the Romans (*xi. 19, 20*).

Verse 44. *And whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken.*

It is clear that Christ here means to show a twofold kind of punishment—a lesser and a greater; as one who falls upon a great stone hurts himself and often breaks a bone, but is injured much less than if a stone had fallen from some high place upon him, for this would destroy him utterly.

The question is what is meant by falling upon the stone and the stone falling upon the person. It cannot be doubted that the metaphor is taken *de medio*; for when a man falls upon a stone he does not fall with such violence as to suffer any injury or fracture of limb. And who can doubt that to fall upon a stone is to stumble at Christ as at a stone? for He is termed a stone of stumbling and a rock of offence by Isaiah (viii. 14), and in 1 *Peter* ii. 8.

The Author, S. Jerome, and Bede think that they who believe in Christ, but commit sin and offend Him, fall upon the stone, because they are punished, indeed, but more lightly; but upon those who do not believe in Him the stone falls, that is, they are punished more heavily. S. Chrysostom, S. Augustin (*Serm.* xl. *de Verb. Dom.*), Euthymius, and Theophylact seem to think that to fall upon the stone is not to believe in Christ; which would appear to be the true sense, because the falling upon Christ is spoken of in the same sentence as that in which Christ is called the Stone of Offence. He is, therefore, called such, because many who saw His miracles, and ought to have been brought by them to believe in Him, were so far from doing so that they rather made them a reason for calumniating Him. This is to fall upon the stone; and S. Paul to the Romans (ix. 33) and S. Peter (*Ep.* i, ii. 7, 8) seem to have spoken to this effect: "To you, therefore, that believe". Not to believe, then, is to fall upon the stone; but what it is for the particular stone to fall upon a particular person is

more doubtful. S. Chrysostom, Euthymius, and Theophylact say that it is nothing more than that Christ was angry; but this will hardly seem to be probable. S. Augustin seems to speak to better purpose (*Serm. xl. de Verb. Dom.*)—that the stone falling upon anyone is Christ coming from heaven to judge and condemn. It is the same, therefore, as if Christ had said that whoever does not believe in Him is miserable even in this life; that is, he falls upon the stone, but that he will be far more miserable in the next life when He condemns him, that is, when that stone had fallen upon him. In the same way S. John in the *Apocalypse* (ii. 11; xx. 14; xxi. 8) speaks of the first and second death as if to distinguish between two punishments—the one greater, the other less.

## CHAPTER XXII.

THE PARABLE OF THE MARRIAGE FEAST—CHRIST ORDERS  
TRIBUTE TO BE PAID TO CÆSAR—HE CONFUTES THE  
SADDUCEES—SHOWS WHICH IS THE FIRST COMMAND-  
MENT IN THE LAW—AND PUZZLES THE PHARISEES.

Verse 1. *And Jesus answering.*

“ANSWERING” is put for “speaking” by a Hebraism, as frequently before.

Verse 2. *Is likened.*

Authorities differ as to whether or not this is the same parable as that of S. Luke (xiv. 16).

Some, for many reasons, think it a different one.

1. The giver of the feast in this is a king. In *S. Luke* he is not.

2. Here the feast is a dinner (*prandium*). There it is a supper (*cæna*).

3. Here are many servants, and they were sent frequently to call those who were invited. There there is only one, and he was only sent once.

4. In this the invited guests do not excuse themselves, but merely neglect to come. In that they excuse themselves, each in his own manner.

5. In this the servants are ill-treated or killed. In that they are not.

6. In this an army is sent by the lord of the vineyard (*sic* in the text, but read “the king”) to slay the “husbandmen”. In that there is none.

7. In this the king enters the guest-chamber and finds a man not having on a wedding-garment, whom he commands to be bound and cast into outer darkness. In that nothing of the kind takes place.

This is the opinion of S. Augustin (*De Consens.*, ii. 70), S. Gregory (*Hom.* xxxviii. *in Evangel.*), Strabus, and S. Thomas.

Others think the two parables the same because they have each a marriage, the feast of which is called a dinner by S. Matthew and a supper by S. Luke.

This is the opinion of S. Irenæus (iv. 70, 76) and Theophylact (*in loc.*). Even S. Gregory thinks it probable. It appears to be the more so because the other facts recorded here by S. Matthew, and elsewhere by S. Luke, are very similar; while the differences are too slight to cause them to be regarded as different parables. For there being mention of a king in one and not in another, and S. Matthew's speaking of a dinner, and S. Luke of a supper, is without weight. S. Gregory himself says that the Ancients did not dine before the ninth hour, and they called supper (*cœnam*) *prandium*. This may not be certain. All the arguments on the other side of the question, however, can be answered with one word. The Evangelists, when describing the same parable, or even the same history, do not relate all the facts, nor use the same words, but give the same meaning. This is the case here.

What may appear to be of greater weight is that S. Luke relates this parable as having been given at a different time and place, namely, when Christ was supping at the house of one of the chief Pharisees, and a guest said: "Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God" (xiv. 15). This objection can be answered without difficulty. Either S. Matthew or S. Luke did not observe the *ordo temporis*, as is often the case with them. It is more probable that S. Luke followed time and place, while S. Matthew related

the parable here, because it resembled the preceding one, and he was not solicitous to construct a history of the events as they happened, but to relate the teaching of Christ. He therefore referred all His discourses of the same signification, and containing the same doctrine, to the same place.

*To a king.*

That is, the same thing happens in the kingdom of heaven, as if a king had made a marriage for his son, as explained on chap. xxi. 16; for the kingdom of heaven—that is, the Church—is not compared to the king, but to the guest-chamber where the supper was held. We must first see to what the parable tends, and then, as we have said before, what are the peculiar and necessary parts that contain the meaning.

Christ seems to have intended to teach two things :

First, That many are called to the kingdom of heaven,—that is, the Church,—but few come. With this He concludes at verse 14.

Secondly, That not all who come when they are called to the Church will be saved,—that is, are worthy of the heavenly banquet, because some have not on the wedding-garment (as in verse 11). The parable is directed against the Jews, who, when invited, would not come, and the Gentiles were therefore put into their place.

The necessary portions of the parable appear to be seven.

1. The first is the king, who is undoubtedly God. That He is not called “a man,” but “a king,” may be partly to show His Divine Majesty, and partly to account for the splendour of the feast.

2. The second part is the marriage—that is, the feast—for the Evangelist all through the chapter calls the marriage a feast. Some say that the feast signifies the glory of heaven and the life of beatification, under which similitude they are often described in Scripture (as in *Ps.* xvi. 15; *Apoc.* xix. 9; *S. Luke* xiv. 15; xxii. 29, 30). So says S.



Hilary (*Can. xxii. on S. Matt.*). Others think the feast to have been the outpouring of divine grace, given to those who come into the Church, or the Word of God, by which they are fed; for the Word of God is often compared to food, as by S. Paul (1 *Cor.* iii. 2; *Heb.* v. 12). In *Amos* (viii. 11), in like manner, God threatens to send a famine into the land: not, indeed, a famine of bread, but of the Word of God. So Origen (*Tract. xx. on S. Matt.*), The Author, and Euthymius.

3. The third part is the son of the king, whose marriage is celebrated. He is clearly Christ, who is often called the bridegroom (as ix. 15; xxv. 1; *S. John* iii. 29; *Apoc.* xix. 7-9). It is not so clear who the bride is. Some think that she is each man's soul; as Theophylact, The Author (*Hom.* xli.). Others say that she is the Church; as Origen (*Tract. xx. in S. Matt.*), S. Hilary (*Can. xxii.*), S. Jerome (in *Comment.*), S. Gregory (*Hom. xxxviii. in Evangel.*). This would appear more probable, because S. John (*Apoc.* xxi. 2) calls the Church "the spouse of Christ". S. Paul (*Ephes.* v. 25) exhorts husbands to love their wives as Christ loved the Church: signifying that the Church was His bride; and in verses 31, 32.

Authorities vary as to when this marriage between Christ and the Church is celebrated. Some say that it was to be after the Resurrection, but that the guests were invited to a future marriage. So Origen and S. Hilary. And it is hardly to be doubted from the parable (xxv. 1) of the bridegroom coming in the middle of the night that the time of the Resurrection and the last advent of Christ are signified. S. John also (*Apoc.* xix. 9) speaks of this marriage, which is to be celebrated, not on earth, but in heaven, after the time of the Resurrection. Others say that the marriage was celebrated when the Son of God was made the Son of man, for He then united the Church to Himself as to a bridegroom. So says S. Gregory (*Hom. xxxviii. in*

*Evangel.*). Each opinion is true ; for, as has been said elsewhere, the marriage of Christ has been celebrated often : (1) When He was made man, His Incarnation being as a spousal rite. (2) It will be celebrated when He shall have formed for Himself a glorious Church not having spot or wrinkle. This will be when He shall unite it to Himself in heaven freed from every stain. Men are invited to both these marriages—to the first, that they may come to the Church of God and be fed by the Word of God ; to the second, that they may be saved, and may eat and drink at the table of Christ in the kingdom of God.

4. They who are invited. These are said by S. Ambrose (*Comment. on S. Luke xiv.*) to be Gentiles, Jews, and heretics. All other authorities explain it only of the Jews. It is very plain that Christ propounded the parable most especially against them, to show that the Jews who were invited would not come, but that the Gentiles did.

It may be a question whether this is to be understood of all Jews, or only of those who lived after the Incarnation of Christ. S. Hilary says that those alone are invited whom Christ Himself, as man, or the Apostles and their successors, called. Origen, however (*Tract. xx. on S. Matt.*), S. Athanasius (*Quest. 45*), S. Jerome, Bede, Euthymius, Theophylact (in his *Comment.*), and S. Gregory (*Hom. xxxviii.*) think that it should be understood of all Jews, even of those who lived before the Incarnation of Christ. This is the more likely because they were, without doubt, the men who ill-treated and killed the servants that were sent by the king, that is, the ancient prophets.

But how could they who are so far remote from the coming of Christ be invited to His marriage ? They were invited to His future marriage that they might believe in the Christ who was to come, and be fed in the meantime by the word of the Law and the Prophets. If they kept their Law and precepts, they would be invited to that final,

that is, to that heavenly marriage, to which we also who are now guests at the first are bidden.

As S. Gregory says, "God invites both those who were before the Incarnation of Christ and those who were after it"—because "He announced by the Prophets that the Incarnation of the Only-begotten Son should be brought to pass, and by the Apostles that it should be accomplished".

5. The fifth part is the servants. S. Jerome says that in many copies the word is found in the singular, as in *S. Luke*; but our version reads it in the plural, and the sense of the passage seems to require this, as being more expressive. Who the servants were whom the king sent first to invite the Jews is obvious, yet all the authorities do not agree on the point. S. Hilary says that it was the Apostles alone; all others—Origen, S. Chrysostom, S. Jerome, S. Gregory, and Bede—say that they were the Prophets and Apostles. For the Prophets were sent first, and were treated with contumely, and put to death. Afterwards the Apostles were sent into the streets and highways, to bring in all—not the Jews only, but also the Gentiles.

Theophylact and The Author ask how they were called who had before been invited; or how they were invited before they were called; since the same persons seem to have been both invited and called. Theophylact answers that they were probably invited by the natural law to live rightly and holily, and were afterwards called by the Prophets, to come. It would have been better to have said that they were invited through the Law of Moses. For not only the Jews, but all men, were invited by the natural law, and there is no distinction in the parable to signify that men were first invited and afterwards called; but Christ spoke as from custom, and described not what God did to the Jews, but what men did usually to each other. Thus it often happens that men are first invited and

bidden to a feast, and afterwards, when the time is come, are called to it.

6. The sixth part is the entrance of the king into the guest-chamber, while the feast was in progress. The Author explains this to mean God's proving men, to see their value and fitness for their place in the Church. S. Jerome and Bede say better that it means the coming of God to judgment; to retain those who have the wedding-garment, and to reject those who are without it. That the Day of Judgment is intended is clear from the fact that the man who had no wedding-garment was to be bound hand and foot and cast into outer darkness, where was the weeping and gnashing of teeth. We see the same thing in this parable and the previous one of the cockles (xiii. 24), and of the net. The reader will ask how it can be said that the king would come into the guest-chamber, when it is not the king himself, but the king's son—that is, Christ—who would come to judgment. The king will come because his son will come for him (*S. John* v. 22).

7. The seventh part is that of the man who had not on a wedding-garment. There have been different opinions as to what the wedding-garment is. S. Irenæus (iv. 70) and S. Hilary (*in loc.*) explain it to mean the Holy Spirit, as Christ says in *S. Luke* xxiv. 49. But S. Augustin (*Cont. Faust.*, xxii. 19) says that it is the glory of Christ, and that whoever seeks this is endued with the marriage-garment; whilst all who seek not this but their own glory have it not, because they bear not His "insignia," but their own. S. Augustin seems to think that the marriage-garment was some well-known and remarkable dress, such as the bridegroom himself wore, and such as we see the children of kings wear, of some marked and notable colour, called the royal colour, to distinguish them from the children of other men. But there is no account in the history of the Jews, or any other people, of such a thing.

It would seem, rather, to have been not any certain and peculiar attire, which all such guests wore, but some habili-ment more costly and splendid than that of ordinary life ; such as was worn by those who were invited to do honour to a bridegroom, and to adorn his feast ; and that the man who was cast out had none such, and was sent away for his shamelessness in entering in his ordinary sordid and ragged attire, where all the rest wore garments of cost.

But the question is, what is signified by that garment ? The followers of Calvin say that it is faith—for everything is faith with them when they themselves have no faith ; nor, acute as they think themselves, do they consider that that guest came only by faith, without which he could not have entered the guest-chamber—that is, the Church. For to come is to have faith. They who are invited and do not come are said not to come because they have no faith. This man had faith, indeed, but he had no marriage-garment. The marriage-garment, therefore, is not faith.

The opinion, then, of Tertullian (*De Resurrect. Carn.*), Origen, S. Chrysostom, The Author, S. Ambrose (*Serm. xiv. de Natal. Domin.*), S. Jerome, S. Gregory, Theophylact, and Euthymius is true, that the marriage-garment is charity, good works, and a life answering to the faith of Christ. The whole history agrees with this view most perfectly and aptly. For as they who are invited to a wedding ought to have clothing proper to the occasion, so they who are invited and come to the Church through faith, ought to lead a life worthy of faith, and of a follower of Christ. We see that a good life is figured in Scripture by a garment, as in *Apoc. iii. 17, 18* ; *Ephes. iv. 24* ; *Coloss. iii. 9, 10*. Let these men pardon us, then, if we show from this passage that faith alone is not sufficient for salvation ; for the guest at this feast had faith, but because he had no marriage-garment—that is, good works—he was cast into outer darkness.

It will be asked how, if he had faith, he was cast out of the guest-chamber, that is, the Church? as if the king preferred not to have his faith, to having it without his works. The answer is easy. The whole question is to be referred to the Day of Judgment, when God will cast those who have faith without its good works out of the feast, that is, out of heaven—not that they were in heaven before, but that when they were in the Church they appeared to be in heaven. If to their faith they had added good works, they would have been transferred to heaven.

The rest of the parable consists of accretions, which were uttered to complete and beautify the narrative; such as verse 4: "I have prepared my dinner, my beeves and fatlings," &c., which means that all was prepared, that God is waiting for men, that His grace is at hand for all, and that it does not remain with Him that men are not converted from their sins. He named beeves and fatlings, because these formed the provisions at costly banquets. Bulls or young bullocks are such as have never been subjected to the knife or yoke, and which are often mentioned in Scripture as peculiar delicacies (*Gen.* xviii. 7; *1 Kings* xxviii. 24). The man whose prodigal son returned to him (*S. Luke* xv. 23) slew the fatted calf.

Such is the true meaning of these words, though many ancient Fathers thought this a necessary and peculiar part of the parable, with its own proper and distinctive meaning. S. Gregory thinks that the bulls signify the Fathers of the Old Testament, and the fatlings those of the New, who have received a higher grace, and are mentioned in a spiritual sense. Theophylact takes the bulls to be the Old Testament itself, and the fatlings to be the New. S. Jerome and Euthymius more correctly take them for nothing more than the liberal furniture of the feast. What is said in verse 5, and S. Luke's words, "I have bought five yoke of

oxen (xiv. 19), and another, I have married a wife," means nothing more than that the invited guests went each to his own occupation, his farm, or his merchandise, preferring their temporal to their spiritual interests.

The more abstruse meaning may be found in Origen (*in loc.*) and S. Ambrose (*Comment. in Luc. xiv.*). The king sending forth his army to destroy those murderers shows that the wrath of God will descend upon all who refuse His invitation. There may, however, be something in the suggestion of S. Chrysostom, The Author, and Euthymius, that the Roman armies of Titus and Vespasian may be foreshown, as about to take the most utter vengeance on the Jews; though the opinion of S. Jerome and S. Gregory is more probable—that the army was the evil angels whom God sometimes uses to punish men; as *Ps. lxxvii. 49*. So by the servants who are sent a second time into the highways and hedges to call, or, as S. Luke says, to compel all to enter, nothing else is meant than that there is no distinction of countries, but the Gospel is to be preached throughout the whole world to every creature, as Christ afterwards declared (*xxviii. 19*; *S. Mark xvi. 15*). So again the words of S. Luke (xiv. 21), that they should bring in the poor, weak, blind, lame, means only that there should be no distinction of nation or persons, but that all should equally be invited to the Gospel; and Christ names the poor, the weak, the blind, the lame, rather than any other class of persons, because such are not usually invited, and we are to understand that from the banquets of the Gospel no one whatever is to be excluded.

The words "compel them to come in" do not mean that men will be literally forced into the Gospel, but that they should be so entreated and urged as almost to appear to be, in a manner, compelled. Lastly, the binding of the man who had not on the wedding-garment shows only that they who will be condemned will be no more able to

resist the execution of their sentence than if they were literally confined by manacles and fetters.

Verse 13. *Into the exterior darkness.*

On this see chap. viii. 12.

Verse 14. *Many are called, but few are chosen.*

This is the conclusion of the parable, and it appears to contain a difficulty. For while one only of all the guests was rejected, Christ says, "Many are called, but few are chosen"; whereas not a few only, but, with one exception, all were chosen. S. Augustin (*Lib. Cont. Donat.*) says that the one who was cast out represents in his own person all the reprobate, who are many more in number than the elect, and that Christ, therefore, concluded with the words, "Many are called, but few are chosen". These words would seem to apply not so much to those immediately preceding as to the whole of the earlier part of the parable, in which we see that many were called but few, in fact, came, while of these not all were chosen.

Why was one only cast out, when the greater number are to be finally cast out—that is, condemned—as Christ signifies in chap. vii. 13, 14, and 1 *Pet.* iv. 18? It is easy to answer that Christ spoke the parable, not against the Gentiles, but against the Jews, who, when invited in the first place, not only refused to come, but treated the servants of the king who were sent to call them with outrages and death. Of them, therefore, Christ concluded, "Many are called". He would also have them know, by the way, that they who had come, whether Jews or Gentiles, ought not to trust in themselves, merely because they were permitted to enter the guest-chamber; for they would be cast out if they had not on the wedding-garment. To show this, it was enough that one of those who were present was cast out, as not having on that garment. But if a greater number



were to be cast out than retained, why did not Christ say : "The many shall be cast out, the few only shall be retained"? Because this was not done in fact. Christ only said what He did to show that many were called, few chosen.

Verse 16. *And they send their disciples with the Herodians.*

For the Herodians, see chap. xii. 14.

Maldonatus goes into the question of who they probably were at length. He shows :

1. That they were not Gentiles under the rule of Herod.
2. Nor the followers of Herod Antipas, who was taken by them for the Messiah.
3. Nor the soldiers of Herod the Great ; for he was dead, and his sons ruled in Galilee, not Judæa.
4. Nor those Jews who denied the payment of tribute to Cæsar (*Acts* v. 37).

Two opinions remain which have some show of probability. 1. That of those (Origen, *Tract. on S. Matt.* xxi. ; S. Jeromè, *Comment.* ; and, apparently, S. Cyril of Alexandria) who think that they who allowed the payment of tribute to Cæsar were called Herodians, because Herod was a thorough follower of Cæsar, and, as Josephus says, had been overseer of the tribute in Judæa. S. Cyril says that the Herodians were publicans and collectors of the tribute. This is the more likely because the Pharisees, who were the chief supporters of Jewish liberty, and were opposed to Herod, as Josephus says, pretended to constitute Christ judge of the question, the better to conceal their own hatred, and to show that they referred to Him for the purpose, not of trying Him, but of putting an end to the question ; whereas their real object was to excite ill-will against Him.

For if He had answered that the tribute was not to be paid, they would have accused Him of lese-majesty, as they afterwards did (*S. Luke* xxiii. 2). If He had said

that it ought to be paid, He would not have been thought to be Christ, and the promised king of the Jews; for, so far from freeing them, as they hoped, from the foreign rule, He would rather have brought them under the Gentile power. This opinion is strengthened at once by S. Luke, who calls the false accusers *simulatores*, and by Christ Himself, in verse 18: "Why do you tempt Me, ye hypocrites?"

2. The other opinion is that of those who think that the Herodians were some domestic sect, who followed Herod, to whom, so that he could keep his crown, every religion was good. But this is less likely to be true than the former, because there is neither authority nor probability for it in history; although, on the other hand, it may be so far possibly true, that there is nothing against it, and the Evangelists seem to describe the Herodians as some sort of a religious sect like the Pharisees and Sadducees, for they mention them in conjunction with these.

Verse 19. *Show me the coin of the tribute.*

A coin of the kind in which the tribute was paid.

*And they offered Him a penny.*

This is to be understood of the Roman penny, which had Cæsar's image and superscription on it; things which, as most especially hateful, the Jews would by no means permit on their coins. The penny seems to have been equal to an Attic drachma in value. A question has arisen as to how a Roman penny could be called the tribute-money, as if each person paid a penny, when Christ paid a stater for Himself and Peter (*S. Matt.* xvii. 26); that is, four silver drachmas, or fourpence. It has been suggested that this was a different tribute; but the Romans exacted no other tribute from the Jews than the poll-tax, which they had previously paid to the Temple: that is, half

a sicle, equal to two Roman denarii. Pliny (xxxiii. 13) says that the Romans required from conquered nations only silver money. It is more probable, as others say, that each Jew paid two denarii, and that the money was divided into two parts for the sake of convenience.

Verse 21. *The things that are God's.*

These words do not refer merely to the tribute paid for the Temple, but they are spoken generally. The things that are God's are faith, hope, charity, obedience.

Verse 23. *That day.*

It is not quite certain whether this happened on the same day as that on which Christ was tempted by the Pharisees and Herodians ; for it may be a Hebraism and mean "about that time". But it is more probable, as Origen and The Author think, that it was the same day, because S. Matthew here, S. Mark (xii. 18), and S. Luke (xx. 27) so unite this with the preceding events, that the conversation would appear to have taken place on the same day.

*There came to Him the Sadducees.*

For the Sadducees, see chap. iii. 7. They would believe nothing above or beyond nature, and therefore they would not believe the resurrection of the dead. Hence their senseless question to Christ.

Verse 24. *Moses said, If a man die.*

For an explanation of these words, see chap. i. 16.

Verse 29. *Ye err, not knowing the Scriptures.*

Because the Sadducees had appealed to the Scriptures, Christ answers that they did not understand the Scriptures, as S. Chrysostom says. Christ shows two sources of error in them ; one, that they did not understand the Scriptures :

the other, that they did not allow for the goodness and power of God, as S. Mark (xii. 24) describes more plainly.

Verse 30. *In the resurrection.*

"In" is used by a Hebraism for "after," as in *Ps. cxxv. 1*: "When the Lord turned back," *in convertendo*. The time which will ensue after the Resurrection is called the Resurrection; as in verse 28 the whole time during which the law of circumcision was in force is called "the Circumcision" (*Rom. iv. 10*).

*They shall neither marry, nor be married.*

A Hebraism and a Græcism at once. A Hebraism because the third person plural is put for the passive verb impersonal, as in some Latin works *dicunt* is put for *dicitur*, *nubent* for *nubetur*. It is a Græcism, which the Latin translator would not render perhaps, for some reason, idiomatically. For as the Greek word *γαμεῖν* was applied to the marriage of either man or woman, and *nubere* was used in Latin of the woman, and *uxorem ducere* of the man, and the Greek expresses both in one word, the Latin author chose to follow the Greek, because it was not in that age considered barbarous. This is the opinion of Tertullian (*De Resurrect.*) and Ruffinus (*In. Exposit. Symb.*). S. Jerome says himself that he would not have so rendered it, though he would not correct it. The meaning appears to be that after the Resurrection men will not marry women, nor will women be married to men. In a word, there will then be no marriages.

*But shall be as the angels of God.*

Christ does not compare the blessed to the angels in everything, but only in the point on which He was speaking—marriage; as S. Jerome has observed. For the angels are immortal, and therefore have no need of

marriage, the object of which is the continuance of the human race, as explained by S. Luke (xx. 35, 36). It may be observed that all the three Evangelists—S. Matthew, S. Mark, and S. Luke—here use the present tense, “are equal to the angels,” when they had before used the future, *nubent—nubentur*. Christ probably desired to place the future state of beatitude before the sight, and spoke of it as a thing present. The Author, not without reason, asks why, when Christ spoke of fasting, alms, and other spiritual virtues, He did not institute any comparison of men with angels, but only did so when His subject was chastity. His answer, which is a true one, is that there is no virtue so angelical as this one.

*I am the God of Abraham.*

There is a double difficulty in this passage. First, it does not appear how it can rightly be concluded from the words, “I am the God of Abraham,” &c., that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were still living; for God might be called their God, not because He was so then, but because He had been so before: as James and John are called the sons of Zebedee when Zebedee was now dead, and no one is the son of a dead man, but of a living one. The meaning is, that they had been his sons.

Secondly, that even if it could be proved that the souls of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were alive, it is not therefore proved thereby that they will rise again.

To the first question, it has been replied that the force of the argument consists in this: that God did not say, “I was” (*fui aut eram*), but “I am” their God. So say S. Chrysostom, Euthymius, and Theophylact. But it may be objected that the passage should be understood, “I am that God who was the God of Abraham while Abraham was alive”. Or, according to others, God is called the God of those of whom He receives acknowledgment and

worship, as He is called the God of Elias and Daniel, because Elias and Daniel worshipped Him. Hence Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are not wholly dead, because God was called their God—that is, He was worshipped by them. Others suppose that the force of the words lies in this, that although in that sense God can be called the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, because He was once their God, yet it is not to be thought that God would deign to be called the God of those who were now dead. But this is not of much weight. There appears to be a higher than common meaning in the words. S. Chrysostom, Theophylact, and Euthymius have said what seems true, but is not sufficient. For the force of the whole undoubtedly lies in God not having said, “I was,” but “I am”; not *fui* or *eram*, but *sum*; and the meaning may be: “I am the God who made a covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob to perpetuate their seed, and I therefore wish to keep it, because they still live and urge Me daily by their prayers to deliver their children from the captivity of Egypt”. For we keep covenant, not with the dead, but with the living.

And Christ pleased to bring, not an unanswerable argument, but one so far convincing as to be sufficient for the conviction of the Sadducees. For He by these means repressed their arrogance and shamelessness; so that when they proposed, in derision, a Scripture, as if Christ could not escape from it, He showed them that they were so dull and ignorant that they could not reply to even the very lightest argument of Moses in proof of the Resurrection.

The explanation of the second question is less difficult. The Sadducees, as Origen and S. Jerome and The Author have observed, denied the Resurrection, because they did not believe in the immortality of the soul, as is clear from *Acts* xxiii. 8. And, therefore, if the immortality of the soul were proved by an admitted testimony, the Resurrection

would be also proved. Formerly, too, not only among the Jews, but also almost all the schools of philosophy, the two questions of the Immortality of the Soul and the Resurrection were so united together as to be taken for one and the same thing. Thus, we see, the author of the second Book of *Machabees* (xii. 43) from the Immortality of the Soul proves the Resurrection. The same is also done by S. Paul (1 *Cor.* xv.), where all the arguments for the resurrection of the body only avail to prove the immortality of the soul ; but as no one denied the Resurrection who did not believe that the soul died, the same arguments prove the Resurrection.

*He is not the God of the dead, but of the living.*

Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were now dead. But Christ denied that they were dead in the sense supposed by the Sadducees ; that is, that their souls were dead. For, in the sense in which we call men dead whose souls are separated from their bodies, God is called the Lord, not only of the living, but also of the dead (*Rom.* xiv. 8), as S. Chrysostom has observed. S. Luke (xx. 38) adds what seems rather to weaken than add force to the argument ; for he says, "all live" ; for if all the former live to God, even those who are dead, these live also ; and then it does not follow that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are not dead, as Christ would have proved. The answer may be that when Christ added these words, He only gave a reason for calling Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob living who had died ; for all, not only those who are alive in the body, but also those who are dead, are alive to God : not only because their souls are alive, but also because God wills to bring it to pass that they should return to their bodies, and live in the same way as they had lived before ; as Christ said (ix. 24), "The girl is not dead, but sleepeth". Or they are dead to us, but live to God, because we only see their bodies, and their bodies are dead : God sees their souls, and these are truly alive.

Many ask why, as there are so many and plain testimonies in Holy Scripture to the Resurrection, Christ Himself did not most especially bring them forward. Origen (*On S. Matt.* xxi.), S. Jerome, and Bede reply that the Sadducees only received as Scripture the five books of Moses, and that in consequence Christ must necessarily answer them out of these.

Verse 35. *And one of them, a doctor of the law.*

S. Luke (xx. 39, 40) says that one of the Scribes, when the Sadducees had been answered, said to Him, "Master, Thou has well said; and after that they durst not ask Him any more questions". This appears to apply, not to the Scribes and Pharisees (who take this opportunity, as S. Matthew says, of tempting Christ again, to show that they were more learned than the Sadducees), but to the Sadducees themselves. For the man whom S. Matthew calls a doctor of the law, S. Mark (xii. 28) calls a Scribe. Hence we see that although the duties of the Pharisees and Scribes were different, the same person was at times both a Pharisee and a Scribe. For it is clear from verse 34 that this doctor of the law of whom S. Matthew speaks was a Pharisee.

Verse 36. *Which is the great commandment in the Law?*

The positive is here by a Hebraism put for the superlative; as in *S. Mark* xii. 28, 29.

Verse 37. *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God.*

S. Mark (xii. 29) begins with, "Hear, O Israel". S. Matthew only gives the first words, because in Moses both commandments are in the same place and refer to the same thing (*Deut.* vi. 4, 5). The first is, Thou shalt believe in one God. The second, Thou shalt love Him with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul; because he that believes in more than one divides his love, and does not



love one with his whole heart ; as in chap. vi. 24 : " No man can serve two masters," &c.

*With thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul.*

Some raise on these words a distinction apparently too subtle. The meaning simply appears to be that we should love God with all our strength, and look to Him for everything. S. Augustin has expressed this in the following words : " When God said, ' with the whole heart, the whole soul, the whole mind,' He left no part of our life from which He would be absent, and which should yield, as it were, to the fruition of some other object. But whatever else enters the mind as an object of love, it should be carried off at once whither the impulse of entire love hurries it." Lastly, what is read in *Deut.* vi. 5, in other words, is compressed by S. Luke into one word (x. 27) : " Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy strength".

Verse 39. *Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.*

Christ says that these are the two great precepts of the Law. They are not distinct from the others, but a compendium of them. Of the first table, " Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart," &c. Of the second, " Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself".

It will be asked how Christ says that this is the greatest of all the commandments, if they are not different commandments? It would seem to be as if He had said all the commandments are the greatest. In answer Christ meant only that all the commandments tend to the result that we should love God with our whole hearts, and our neighbours as ourselves ; as S. Paul said to the Romans : " Love is the fulfilling of the Law" (xiii. 10); and as Christ Himself said (verse 40) : " On these two commandments dependeth the whole Law and the Prophets".

How we are to understand the words, " Thou shalt love our neighbour," depends on two things : (1) on our know-

ing who is called our neighbour ; (2) the meaning of the word "as," *sicut*.

Christ has explained who our neighbour is by an entire parable (*S. Luke* x. 30). He says that every man is our neighbour.

The meaning of the word "as" is not so obvious. Some take it materially, as if we were ordered to wish for our neighbour all that we wish for ourselves. Others regard the quality and manner, and that we must love our neighbour in the degree in which we love ourselves. Others regard the result, that we should love our neighbour with such effort and feeling (*conatu et effectu*) as those with which we love ourselves.

All these meanings seem contained in the word "as". For there can be no question but that God willed us to desire for our neighbour all that we desire for ourselves, and, for the sake of God, to love him as we love ourselves. But the question is, as S. Augustin has said, how we are commanded to wish for our neighbour what we wish for ourselves, when we often wish for evils—riches, honours, pleasures ; or how we are to love him as ourselves, when we often love ourselves wrongly or more than we ought. It is certain that we ought to wish for ourselves only what is good, and to love ourselves only *propter Deum*. If we do this, we cannot love ourselves otherwise than as we ought ; and we are therefore commanded to love our neighbour in the same way.

It will be objected that even from the first commandment of loving God with our heart, the second of loving our neighbour will follow ; and there was no need in consequence to command us to love our neighbour as ourselves. The obvious reply is, that it is less natural to us to love our neighbour than it is to love ourselves ; that everyone loves himself most ; and that the law in question was given us for this especial reason.

Verse 41. *And the Pharisees being gathered together.*

S. Mark (xii. 35) says that Christ proposed this question while He was teaching in the Temple; but the explanation is more obvious, that the Pharisees were assembled in the Temple.

SS. Mark and Luke do not say that Christ asked the Pharisees, but said to them, when He was teaching, "How do the Scribes say?" but, as S. Augustin (*De Consensu*, ii. 74) says, it is a matter of no moment. S. Matthew has given both the question and the objection, "What think you?" He said, "How then doth David in spirit call him Lord?"

The other two Evangelists have not given the question, but only the objection. And because they had not said that Christ asked the Scribes and Pharisees, they do not say "as you say," but "as the Scribes say". Their saying "as the Scribes say" when it was not the Scribes, but Scripture, has been explained on chap. xvii. 10; for Scripture is said to say what is not found in it, because the interpreters of Scripture said it.

Verse 43. *How then doth David in spirit.*

That is, when he was full of the Spirit of God, not of his own, which might be deceived and lie, but of the Spirit of God, which can do neither. It is a Hebraism, as in *Ps.* xxx. 23 and cxv. 2.

Verse 44. *The Lord said to my Lord.*

(See *Ps.* cix. 6.) The objections of the Jews were chiefly two :

1. That the psalm was not written by David, but either by Melchisedech, as Rabbi Abraham says in his commentaries, or by Eliezer, the servant of Abraham, or by some one who wrote psalms in the time of David, as Aben Ezra supposes.

2. The second objection is that the words are not to be understood of Christ, but either of Abraham—as is the present opinion of the Jews—or of David, as Aben Ezra and Rabbi David think ; or of Ezechia, king of the Jews, as we learn from S. Justin Martyr (*In Tryph.*) and Tertulian (*Cont. Marcion.*, v.) that the Jews used to explain them after the time of Christ. This has been refuted on the *Psalms* cix. For if it had not been certain in the time of Christ that the Psalms were both written by David, and must be understood of Christ, it would have been obvious for the Scribes and Pharisees, who were much more learned than the Jews of later ages, to have replied to it. Now, however, the modern Jews are clearly confuted by the silence of their forefathers.

Verse 45. *If David then call Him Lord, how is He his son ?*

Christ speaks from the opinion of the Pharisees, who thought that Christ would be a mere man, although Scripture declared that He would be not only man, but also God. The words of Christ, then, do not prove that He was not the son of David, but that He was more than the son of David : that is, the son of God, and true God ; and, therefore, David called Him Lord.

## CHAPTER XXIII.

CHRIST ADMONISHES THE PEOPLE TO FOLLOW THE GOOD DOCTRINE, NOT THE BAD EXAMPLE OF THE SCRIBES AND PHARISEES—HE WARNS HIS DISCIPLES NOT TO IMITATE THEIR AMBITION, AND DENOUNCES DIVERS WOES AGAINST THEM FOR THEIR HYPOCRISY AND BLINDNESS.

### Verse 1. *Then.*

WHEN He saw that the Scribes and Pharisees were past being influenced (S. Chrysostom, The Author, Euthymius).

### *Spoke to the multitudes and His disciples.*

Probably not to all the disciples, but to those of them who were less familiar with Him and not so deeply instructed. For it would hardly have seemed necessary to give these admonitions to the Apostles and to those who were always with Him (Origen, *Tract. on S. Matt.* xiv.).

### Verse 2. *On the chair of Moses.*

Some think that the chair of Moses was a platform from which the Scribes and Pharisees read the Law in the hearing of the people, as Esdras did (2 *Esdras* viii. 4). This is the opinion of Euthymius, though confuted by others, because (S. *Luke* iv. 16 ; *Acts* xiii. 16) we learn that it was not the custom of the Jews that they who read or explained the Scriptures should mount a platform, but should speak standing ; as is the custom among the Jews still, and was

formerly among Christians, and as S. Paul wished to be done (1 *Cor.* xiv. 30). By the seat of Moses, S. Jerome and Bede understand the doctrine of Moses. Whoever taught this, used to sit on a seat, though such is not the custom now.

*Scribes and Pharisees.*

On these and their duties, see chap. ii. 4.

Verse 3. *All things, therefore, whatsoever they shall say to you, observe and do.*

It will occur to the reader to ask how Christ could teach that all things which the Scribes and Pharisees ordered should be done, when He so frequently blamed their doctrine and warned them (xvi. 12) to beware of their leaven, and accused the disciples (verses 16, 17) of their false doctrine. S. Augustin (*De Doctrina Christi*, lib. iv. 27; *Cont. Faust.*, xvi. 29) answers, that Christ spoke only of the Pharisees as sitting in the seat of Moses, for then the very seat itself compelled them to speak the truth. But who can doubt that they would have taught their false doctrines in that seat if they had sat on it, or in the synagogue and school of Moses? S. Chrysostom and Euthymius think that Christ could not have meant all their Law, but only those things which were necessary to salvation, such as the precepts of the Decalogue; for He was so far from commanding the observance of ceremonies and the other precepts, which were only given for a time, that He rather did them away. This is more likely, but it is not certain, because not only here but everywhere else He commanded them to keep the Law and its ordinances, and He Himself kept them till His death, because they were not then done away. He does not speak of the doctrine of the Scribes and Pharisees, but of the Law and Moses; as if He had said, All things which the Law and Moses say, when the Scribes and Pharisees read them to you, observe and do; but according to their

works do ye not. So S. Hilary and S. Jerome think. It will be asked why He did not say, "Whatever Moses says," but instead, "Whatever the Scribes and Pharisees say, observe and do"? Two reasons can be given for this: (1) He desired to expose the hypocrisy of the Scribes and Pharisees, which He would not have done if He had not said that they taught in one manner and lived in another; and (2) He was about to censure them very heavily, and it seemed more befitting to praise them first, that He might not appear to disapprove everything with passion and without judgment.

Verse 4. *For they bind heavy burdens.*

The meaning is not, as S. Chrysostom thinks, of ceremonial burdens; because, as said before, Christ had not yet done away the Law of which S. Peter spoke in *Acts* xv. 10, but of those traditions of the Scribes and Pharisees which were either wholly contrary to Scripture, or certainly not necessary to salvation; such as are mentioned with disapprobation in verses 5, 16, 17, as Origen and Theophylact explain.

*But with a finger.*

Christ opposes the finger to the shoulders. The Scribes and Pharisees would not help the unhappy persons whom they had burthened with their senseless laws even by their little finger; they would neither encourage them by their example to bear their burthens, nor act as stewards in their own traditions, when they would often do so in the law of God; that is, they would not move them with a finger.

Verse 5. *For they make broad.*

Christ proves the truth of the words immediately preceding by two of the most trivial things—their phylacteries and fringes. For how could they who placed their pride in such matters care for greater ones?

*Their phylacteries.*

Phylacteries, as Origen, S. Chrysostom, S. Jerome, and Euthymius say, were parchments on which precepts of the Law were written, and which the Pharisees and Scribes bound round their heads and arms to keep the law of God continually before their eyes, as ordered in *Deut.* vi. 8. S. Jerome says that the Indians, Persians, and Babylonians did the same in his time ; and they were called phylacteries by the Greeks because they were instituted to preserve the memory of the Law.

Certain unwoven fringes **ציצת** hung down from the bottom of the dress, and were called *fimbria*, or fringes, by the Hebrews. **ציצת** *tsitsith* (*Numb.* xv. 28), as Rabbi David explains it, and **גרלים** (*Deut.* xxii. 12).

The Jews were commanded by God to make fringes of blue in the two passages cited above, to keep them in remembrance of the Law. The Scribes and Pharisees increased their size more than the other Jews. S. Jerome says that they even used to fasten them with very sharp thorns, which pricked them when they walked or sat down, and by the pain reminded them of the Law. It may be asked why the Scribes and Pharisees made their hems and fringes broad from ambition. It has been answered that the mere precepts of the Law could be written on their phylacteries, but it cannot be said of the fringes, on which no precepts could be written. It is more likely, as Theophylact thinks, that they did it to make themselves more conspicuous as they walked about, and that they might be seen to be observers of the Law ; or, as is the opinion of S. Chrysostom, that they might show that they kept the Law more carefully than the other Jews.

Verse 8. *But be not ye called Rabbi.*

From these words to verse 13 the whole is a warning of



the disciples not to follow the example of the Pharisees. God does not forbid father or master to call or be called this, absolutely, but only in comparison with Himself; and the Pharisees of whom He was speaking. That, in comparison with God, we should think that there could be neither father nor master; nor prefer either these titles of honour and love, to the honour and love of Him. In comparison with the Pharisees; that we do not call them father, or master, in the same sense as they do—that is, ambitiously and in vain-glory—like those who said, “I am of Paul,” and another, “I am of Apollo” (1 Cor. iii. 4), glorying each in his own master. In any other sense we may, beyond doubt, both call ourselves and be called father or master.

Verse 13. *But woe to you.*

This verse is put as the 14th by S. Chrysostom, Euthymius, Theophylact, and The Author, and the 14th is put here. Christ speaks with great anger of the Scribes and Pharisees to the end of the chapter, especially accusing them of hypocrisy: not in any sudden outbreak of powerless anger or slander, but with the fixed plan and determination of warning the unhappy people before His approaching death not to be deluded by the false pretences of these men. It is matter of doubt whether all that Christ says against the Scribes and Pharisees in this chapter was said at the same time and place. For S. Luke (xi. 39, 42-52) relates much of it as if spoken at a different time; and S. Augustin (*De Consens.*, ii. 75) thinks that there were two conversations, one given by S. Matthew, the other by S. Luke, and that Christ said the same things twice. But it would appear more probable that He said all once, and at the same time, as appears from S. Luke, but that S. Matthew brought all into one in this place because the argument was the same, and that He acted thus, not to frame the

history in the exact order of time, but to set forth the doctrine of Christ, as in the preceding chapter (verse 2) under similar circumstances.

*Because you shut the kingdom of heaven.*

S. Luke says a little otherwise (xi. 52) : You have taken away the key of knowledge. These words have more force, for they signify that the Scribes and Pharisees had so usurped to themselves the knowledge of the Law that they thought that no one, unless they themselves showed them the way, could enter into the kingdom of heaven. The metaphor is taken from the master of the house, who keeps the key of it if he does not wish persons to enter or leave it without his consent. The Scribes and Pharisees are said to shut the kingdom of heaven because they taught men that no one could enter unless they themselves opened, that is, taught them how to enter ; under which idea they placed upon the people all the traditions they pleased, like heavy burthens. The words "Before men" is a Hebraism **לפני אדם** "the opening of the door before the eyes of men," by which is meant that they prevented many who were at the threshold of the gate of heaven ; and who, unless they prevented them, would enter in, as S. Chrysostom perceived and as is indicated in the next words, *Vos non*, "You yourselves do not enter in, and those that are going in you suffer not to enter".

The meaning of the words, "You yourselves do not enter in," &c., has been explained in two ways. Origen, Hilary, The Author, S. Jerome, and Bede think that they themselves did not believe in Christ and hindered others from doing so ; but, as was said on verse 3, Christ is speaking here of the observance of the Law. S. Chrysostom's opinion seems better : that the Scribes and Pharisees had not entered into the kingdom of heaven, because they did not keep the ordinances of God ; and they prevented others

from doing so, because they loaded them with useless and intolerable traditions ; and when the people could not keep them they could not, at least in the opinion of the Pharisees, enter into the kingdom of heaven ; but it did not hinder their salvation that they had not kept the traditions of the Pharisees. Christ, however, speaks from the opinion of the Pharisees. This meaning is easily gathered from verse 16, &c.

Verse 14. *Because you devour the houses of widows.*

Some think that Origen and S. Jerome did not read this verse, as they did not explain it, and it is not in the eighth Canon of the Gospels, in which only SS. Mark and Luke are contained. This would go rather against the Canon than the Gospels, for all versions, Latin, Greek, and Syriac, have it. This and the former verse, as said before, have been transposed by the Greeks.

The Scribes and Pharisees are said to devour widows' houses, that is, their property ; but the manner of their doing so is not certain. Some think that they visited the houses of widows to give them consolation as such, and being entertained liberally for their office and dignity, they thus devoured their substance. Others suppose that widows sought them as men of holiness, and purchased their prayers. This is more likely, as the words that follow immediately, " Praying long prayers," show : giving the probable reason of their devouring their houses, that they sold these prayers. Christ seems to have mentioned widows rather than other women for two especial reasons : (1) because such are thought to be more especially religious, and are much more easily imposed upon by the appearance of holiness ; and (2) because it was a much greater wickedness in the Scribes and Pharisees to devour the substance of widows, who should rather have received comfort and support, than to consume the property of other less un-

happy persons. This is the view taken by S. Chrysostom and Euthymius.

*Praying long prayers.*

The Greek adds *καὶ προφάσει μακρὰ προσευχόμενοι*, "and for a pretence, or, for an occasion, making long prayers"; our version does not contain the words *καί* or *προφάσει*. The former seems, indeed, not to be required by, but to be at variance with, the text. The other word, "for an occasion" (*προφάσει*), seems to be tenable and agreeable to the meaning of the passage. Our interpreter probably read them, but gave the meaning rather than the words. The word "occasion," if it remain, may mean the bait which the priests and Pharisees used with their long prayers to take the means of the women; as it is used by S. Paul: "What then? So that by all means, whether by occasion or by truth, Christ be preached; in this also I rejoice, yea, and will rejoice" (*Phil.* i. 18).

*For this you shall receive the greater judgment.*

That is, double the judgment of the rest, as the next verse describes, because they sinned twofold: (1) by consuming the means of the widows; and (2) by doing it under the pretence of holiness; as S. Chrysostom and The Author have observed. "Judgment" is put by a Hebraism, and according to Scripture, for condemnation. "Receive" signifies in Hebrew both to receive and to bear (*ferre*).

Verse 15. *You go about the sea and the land* ("aridam").

That is, you leave nothing undone to make one proselyte. This seems a kind of proverb like leaving no stone unturned among the Latins, and "to move every rope" among the Greeks. The land is called *aridam* (dry) in agreement with the Hebrew, as in *Gen.* i. 10, and as the Greeks often called it. S. Chrysostom and Euthymius on

the passage say that the words describe not the diligence of the Scribes and Pharisees, but the difficulty of the matter, as if the meaning were: "Woe to you, Scribes and Pharisees, who by your wickedness so turn away strangers from all desire of the divine Law, that it is so difficult to make even one proselyte to the true religion, that you are compelled to go round about sea and land for him". But it is clearly not the difficulty that is meant, but the zeal and ambition of the Scribes and Pharisees, who endeavoured most anxiously to draw the Gentiles to the Jewish religion, either from ambition that they might increase the number of the people of God, and have the government of them from their holiness and doctrine, as some say; or, as The Author and others think, that by augmenting the number of the Jews, they might increase the number of sacrifices, and thus get greater profit for themselves. Either is credible of the Pharisees. The Greeks called those who turned from Gentile superstitions to the religion of the Jews, proselytes, the Hebrews גרים and Christians, neophytes (1 *Tim.* iii. 6).

*And when he is made, you make him the child of hell.*

This is a Hebraism, by which he is called a child of hell who has merited hell, as he is called a child of death who is in time to die.

*Twofold more than yourselves.*

Διπλότερον ὑμῶν, "Twofold more than yourselves"; that is, you merit a twofold condemnation and punishment, but you make him merit a more than twofold. It was shown in the preceding verse how the Scribes and Pharisees were deserving of a twofold punishment. Their sin was twofold: avarice and the simulation of holiness. How they could make their proselytes worse than themselves may be a question, for it seems scarcely possible. The Author

thinks that the proselytes deserved a heavier punishment than the Pharisees, because they sinned more heavily in not believing Christ when they had forsaken their idolatry, than if they had never left it. S. Chrysostom says that the Pharisees deliberately endeavoured to make their converts from idolatry worse than themselves. The Author and Euthymius say, with more reason, that they were more inclined by nature to copy vice than virtue, and that thus the masters were easily surpassed in wickedness by their disciples.

Verse 16. *Blind guides.*

They are called guides, not as being true guides, but either from their office of teachers, or from the opinion of those who set themselves up as the leaders of the rest: as the idols of the Gentiles are called gods, because the Gentiles thought them such, and the false prophets are often called Prophets.

*Whosoever swears by the Temple.*

Ἐν τῷ ναῷ, by a Hebraism for *per*, “by,” as in the following verses 2 is put both for *in* and *per*.

*It is nothing.*

That is, the person owes nothing, is not a debtor. Some say that this is not to be taken absolutely, but comparatively; for it is not likely that the Pharisees were so shameless as to teach that it was no sin to swear by the Temple: but that it was a less sin than to swear by the gold of the Temple, though many of the Ancients thought this. S. Jerome, Theophylact, and S. Thomas explain it thus. If any man, in any suit or doubtful question, swore by the Temple, and was afterwards convicted of falsehood, he was not held guilty; but if he swore by the gold and money which were offered to the priests in the Temple, he was at once compelled to make good that which he had

sworn to do. Again, if a man swore by the altar, no one thought him guilty of perjury; but if he swore by the oblations—that is, the victims or sacrifices, or other offerings to God on the altar—the vow was required to be most strictly performed. The above authors think that avarice was the original cause of this tradition. It is a question what was meant by the gold of the Temple. Theophylact thinks it meant all the gold with which the interior of the Temple was adorned; Euthymius, the vessels, candlesticks, and other gold furniture of the Temple; S. Jerome and Bede, all the money of the Temple, which is more likely.

*Verse 17. For whether.*

Christ gives as His reason for calling the Pharisees blind that they do not see that the Temple is greater than the gold. Christ argues from the natural axiom which is found in Aristotle, "That, because of which a thing is such as it is, is greater than the thing" (lib. i., poster. 2). For the gold in the Temple would not be holy unless the Temple were holy. The Temple, therefore, is more holy.

*Verse 22. And he that sweareth by heaven.*

Chap. v. 34 explains this.

*Verse 23. And you have left.*

The time past is meant here, when the Scribes and Pharisees had consigned the most weighty precepts of God to oblivion, as completely as if they had been abrogated.

*Judgment.*

Christ explains the more weighty precepts of the Law, which they had long ago forsaken: judgment, by which his right is rendered to every man—for the Scribes and Pharisees were often judges, as in chap. v. 22—and Scrip-

ture hates nothing more than corrupt or perverse judgment (*Deut.* xvi. 19 ; *Isa.* i. 25 ; *Mich.* iii. 11 ; vii. 3).

*Mercy.*

Love of our neighbour, which God prefers before all things (*Osee* vi. 6 ; *Apoc.* ix. 13 ; *Mich.* vi. 8 ; *Zach.* vii. 9).

*Faith.*

Not divine faith, by which we believe in God, but the human faith, by which we keep our mutual compacts. It is defined to be "trustworthiness in speech and act" (*Lib. de Offic.*, i.). God would have it carefully kept (*Levit.* vi. 2, 4, 5).

Verse 24. *Who strain out a gnat and swallow a camel.*

In hot climates gnats are apt to get into the wine, so that it is often necessary to strain it before drinking. A camel is named, after the custom of the country, as the greatest object opposed to the least (ix. 27). It appears to have been a proverb like the other, "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle".

Verse 25. *The outside of the cup and the dish.*

τὸ ἔξωθεν τοῦ ποτηρίου. The outside of the cup and of the dish, or, what would be nearer the Greek idiom, *quod extra calicem et paropsidem est*. S. Matthew calls the cup *calicem*, and the dish from which the food was taken *paropsidem*. S. Luke calls the latter *catinum*, which is a similar thing or the same.

*But within.*

That is, the contents, for *τά* is understood. The cup and the dish are the man himself. The outside is the defilements of the body, the inside those of the soul. The application is to those who gave too much care to the removal of bodily stains, and too little to remedy the faults of the



soul. This also appears to have been a proverb, by which is meant a man who regards too much the things that are less essential, and neglects what is of real importance ; as if he should clean the outside of a vessel which contains meat or drink, and leave the inside unclean.

Verse 26. *That the outside may become clean.*

It has been asked how, the inside being cleansed, that which is without should be cleansed ; for there appears to be no obstacle to a man having a clean mind but a soiled body. That which is from without is ordered to be made clean after the inside has been so ; whereas the outside does not more defile than if it were not unclean, as is said in chap. xv. 11 : “ Not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man, but what cometh out of the mouth, this defileth a man ” ; and *Titus* i. 15 : “ All things are clean to the clean ; but to them that are defiled and to unbelievers nothing is clean ; but both their mind and their conscience are defiled ”.

Verse 29. *That build the sepulchres of the Prophets and adorn the monuments of the just.*

Christ seems to call the same persons Prophets and just men, as in other places, and *S. John* ix. 17 : as the tombs and monuments are the same. The Hebrew often expresses the same idea in different words. They built the tombs of the Prophets, as *S. Hilary* says, when decayed by time. It appears from this passage that these tombs were held in honour by the Jews, and it was not blameable, but praiseworthy, in the Scribes and Pharisees to take care of them, as *Origen* (*Tract. in Matt.* xxvi.), *S. Chrysostom*, and *Euthymius* point out. Christ does not blame them for this ; but because, when they had built these up, they committed worse murders than they who killed the Prophets, whose sepulchres they built.

Verse 31. *Wherefore you are witnesses against yourselves, that you are the sons of them that killed the Prophets.*

Christ convicts the Scribes and Pharisees out of their own lips of being the sons of those who slew the Prophets: "If we had been in the days of our fathers we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the Prophets"—that they bear witness against themselves that they are the sons of those who killed the Prophets; but S. Luke states the case a little differently (xi. 48): "Truly you bear witness that you consent to the doings of your fathers: for they indeed killed them, and you build their sepulchres". It is probable that Christ said both what S. Matthew and what S. Luke ascribe to Him, and that S. Matthew recorded one of the sayings and S. Luke the other. It remains to be seen how, in *S. Luke*, Christ concludes that they bear witness that they consented to the deeds of their fathers. Christ does not appear to conclude this *ex animi sententia*, but only to turn the argument which the Scribes and Pharisees used to prove their holiness against them, and to prove their wickedness. For they who built the tombs of the Prophets might appear either to have done so in their honour, or to kill them a second time—that is, to bury their memories with their bodies; like robbers, who bury their victims, not from humanity, but to prevent their being discovered. The Scribes and Pharisees use the argument in the former sense; Christ in the latter; not to show that they built the tombs of the Prophets with the design of consenting to the murders of their fathers, but that the fact itself might be taken in this sense, as well as in the contrary one.

Verse 32. *Fill ye up then the measure of your fathers.*

That is, "Kill those Prophets whom, as they were not yet in existence, your fathers could not kill". Christ means Himself and those whom He said (verse 34) that He would

send. S. Chrysostom, Theophylact, and Euthymius have observed that, although Christ appears to command, He does not really do so, but foretells what would happen, as He did when He said to Judas Iscariot (*S. John* xiii. 27), "That which thou doest, do quickly". It might rather be said that He made a concession to them.

Verse 33. *You serpents, generation of vipers.*

(*Vide* chap. iii. 7.) The meaning is, as they were the sons of vipers, what could they be but vipers themselves? for the offspring cannot be better than their parents, though they are often worse.

*How will you flee from the judgment of hell?*

That is, how can you be saved, being, as you are, vipers? This is not said as a thing impossible, for they might bring forth penitence and be saved: but that those who have persisted long and obstinately in wickedness rarely repent; or they might have been so hardened as to appear beyond the hope of amendment.

Verse 34. *Therefore.*

Christ does not say why He would send Prophets, and wise men, and Scribes, for He was not about to send them on account of the wickedness of the Scribes and Pharisees; but He gives the reason for which the Scribes and Pharisees would put them to death. They were serpents and generations of vipers, which are hostile to the life of man. S. Luke (xi. 49) speaks otherwise: "For this cause also the wisdom of God said, I will send to them Prophets and Apostles, and some of them they will kill and persecute". Christ seems to bring up the testimony of some Prophet, when none such is in Scripture. It is credible that Christ said what is related by S. Luke, and did not say, "Behold, I send," as S. Matthew says, but "The wisdom of God said, I will send," lest if He had said, "I send," He should appear to make

Himself God, whose prerogative it is to send the Prophets. S. Matthew gives the meaning, but not the words. For it is the same thing in Him to say, "The wisdom of God sends," and "I send," because He is the wisdom of God, and by the ambiguity of His words He escaped ill-will. He would not therefore cite the words of any of the Prophets, but spoke as Himself interpreting the will of God and announcing the future. As the Prophets used to say, "Thus saith the Lord," so He said, "The wisdom of God saith"—that is, "decreed"—a Hebraism.

*Prophets and wise men and Scribes.*

S. Luke says Prophets and Apostles; hence it appears that Christ called His Apostles Scribes and Prophets, as in accordance with the ordinary language of the Jews, by whom the Scribes were called Doctors of the Law (xiii. 52; 1 Cor. i. 20). Where is the wise? Where is the Scribe? Where is the disputer of this world?

Verse 35. *That upon you may come.*

Euthymius rightly observes that in this passage "that" signifies not the cause but the effect. It is a Hebrew expression signifying that the blood of one may come upon another, or upon his head; that is, that he may suffer the punishment of murder, as chap. xxvii. 25: "His blood be upon us and upon our children"—that is, "we and our children will answer for it, and if there be any sin, we will suffer the penalty". A similar expression is found in other places: *Levit.* xx. 9-13; *Joshua* xi. 19; *2 Kings* i. 16. As the Latins say, "If any evil happen, on me and my head be it" (Seneca, *De Beneficiis*, xxxi.).

*That upon you may come all the just blood that hath been shed upon the earth, from the blood of Abel the just even to the blood of Zacharias the son of Barachias, whom you killed between the Temple and the Altar.*

Christ evidently intended to say that they should suffer

punishment for the death of all the Prophets who had been slain by the Jews. Abel is numbered among the Prophets, because he seemed to foreshow the sacrifice of Christ by his own, as S. Paul says (*Heb.* xi. 4). Christ enumerates Abel amongst those who were slain by the Jews, when he was not so, because Cain, by whom he was slain, was the head of all murderers, and although he was not by nature the father of the Jews, he was so by imitation. The Jews are said to be his sons, therefore, in the sense in which they are said to be the sons of the devil (*S. John* viii. 44 ; *S. Jude* 11). So says The Author. There is a question here as to who was the Zacharias of whom Christ speaks, as there were many of that name. Some think that Christ speaks of Zacharias the father of John the Baptist. These mention an ancient apocryphal tradition that when, after the birth of Christ, His mother went as before to sit among the virgins, the priests prevented her, as she had borne a son ; and slew Zacharias, her defender, who knew that she was a virgin, and that for this reason he was slain by the other priests between the Temple and the Altar. So say Origen (*Tract. in S. Matt.* xvi.), S. Basil (*Hom. de Human. Generat. Christ.*), Theophylact and Euthymius (*in loc.*), Epiphanius (*Hæres. Gnost.*). This would agree well with the text if there were any support for it from history. For Zacharias, the father of John, was the last of the Prophets ; and it is clear that Christ intended to say that the Scribes and Pharisees should suffer punishment for the blood of all the Prophets who had been slain from the first to the last. But the name Barachias does not agree, for there is nothing to show that the father of Zacharias was Barachias.

Others think that Christ spoke of that Zacharias who was one of the Prophets, for (*Zach.* i. 1) he is called the son of Barachias. Origen, S. Chrysostom, and S. Jerome think this. Others, again, suppose him to have been the Zacharias the son of Jehoida the priest, who (2 *Paral.*

xxiv. 21) is said to have been slain between the Temple and the Altar. This is the opinion of S. Jerome, Bede, and all the later authorities. It is more likely than the others, as this is the only Zacharias mentioned in Scripture as having been slain between the Temple and the Altar; and it is very probable that Christ would have alluded to a fact that was well known and which is related in Scripture. There is one objection, however, to this. The Zacharias of Scripture is called the son, not of Barachias, but Jehoida. Two answers have been given to the objection. 1. As S. Jerome says, Christ regarded not the sound of the name (*vox nominis*), but the meaning. Barachias means in Hebrew, "Blessed of the Lord"; that is, a just man, one abounding in divine grace, such as all Scripture states Jehoida to have been. 2. Jehoida had two names, and was called Jehoida by name and Barachias by surname. This conjecture is probable, and in confirmation of it S. Jerome says that he read in the Gospel of the Nazarenes, for "the son of Barachias," "the son of Jehoida".

Another objection may occur, that this Zacharias was not the last of the Prophets, as Christ appears to signify; for there were many after him, and John Baptist was the last who was slain. The answer is easy. Christ only speaks of those Prophets who are mentioned as having been slain in Holy Scripture, that the Scribes and Pharisees might not be able to deny that these were put to death by their fathers. Among those of whom we read in Scripture as having been put to death, that Zacharias, the son of Jehoida, was the last.

Another question may here arise—how Christ could threaten that all the blood of the ancient Prophets should come upon the Scribes and Pharisees, when they had not killed them themselves, and the son ought not to bear the iniquity of his father (*Ezek. xviii. 19*).

It has been answered that all the Jews were as one congregation and nation. In nations, the deeds of the fathers are accounted as those of their descendants. Thus the Amalekites, because they refused a passage through their country to the children of Israel when coming out of Egypt, are ordered to be wholly cut off (*Exod.* xvii. 8-14). This was not done till more than four hundred years after, when none of those who refused the Israelites were alive (1 *Kings* xv. 6, 7). On the same principle, the Scribes and Pharisees were made accountable for the blood of the Prophets; not that they killed them themselves, but as their state and forefathers did so, they themselves are said to have done it. So say S. Jerome and Bede. Others say that the sons often share the punishment of their fathers when they follow their sins, as God has threatened (*Exod.* xx. 5). Others, again, that the children are not punished for the sins of their fathers, even when they follow their sins: but are said to be so, because, when they did not reject their example, they suffered heavier punishments. So say S. Chrysostom, Theophylact, and Euthymius. It does not seem necessary to speak here as to whether children are punished for the sins of their fathers, because the question has been discussed at length on *Exod.* xx. 5. It would appear that in this instance Christ spoke in the ordinary human manner, and meant only that the Scribes and Pharisees would suffer such heavy punishments for their murders that they might seem to bear the weight even of those of their fathers, as well as their own: not that they had to bear them both, but that they would be punished more heavily, and they merited no mercy. We say of an assassin who has committed many murders with impunity, if he perpetrates a fresh one and is convicted and executed, that he has paid all at once. Not that he has done so literally, one by one: not that he suffered greater punishment than he deserved for his last crime; but he is

punished without mercy, and has undergone the very greatest penalty possible.

The event, as found in verse 38, "Behold your house shall be left to you desolate," and the whole chapter following, shows that this was the meaning of Christ. In that destruction it was scarcely possible that the Scribes and Pharisees could have undergone greater punishments than they did, as Josephus has related in full. But if they had put no other prophet or disciple of Christ to death, they would have merited punishments far more heavy for having crucified Christ Himself. Thus they were so far from having expiated the guilt of their forefathers, that they did not suffer the full penalty even for their own offences ; but they are said to have paid the penalty of the blood of all the Prophets, because they suffered the most they could.

Verse 36. *Amen, I say unto you, all these things shall come upon this generation.*

The exclamation, "Amen," and its repetition show that, as was said before, the threat is not to be considered an empty one. Christ means the whole race of Jews by the words "this generation". It is a Hebraism, and the word means genus.

Verse 37. *How often would I have gathered together thy children, as the hen doth gather the chickens under her wings, and thou wouldest not.*

All ancient authorities agree that the meaning is, that God called the Jews to a better mind, and they would not come, as is shown in the parable in the preceding chapter (verse 3); and in *Prov.* i. 24 : "Because I called, and you refused ; I stretched out My hand, and there was none that regarded"; and *Isa.* lxxv. 12, and lxxvi. 4 : "Because I called, and ye did not answer ; I spoke, and you did not



hear"; and *Jer.* vii. 13: "I have spoken to you, rising up early and speaking, and you have not heard; and I have called you, and you have not answered". To call, and to wish to gather together, is the same thing; and not to answer, and to refuse to be gathered together, is the same thing.

Verse 38. *Behold, your house shall be left unto you desolate.*

The word "Behold" seems to indicate the near approach of the event, as observed (ii. 1) in many other passages. By "your house" Christ either meant the city, as Bede supposes: that being their city which was speedily to be laid waste, as God had before threatened—"And now I will show you what I will do to My vineyard. I will take away the hedge thereof, and it shall be wasted; and I will break down the wall thereof, and it shall be trodden down; and I will make it desolate" (*Isa.* v. 5)—or, as is more probable, the Temple, as S. Jerome and Theophylact say; because, as of old, so in these days, the Jews so trusted to their Temple that they thought themselves to possess a most certain protection in it, as we find from *Jer.* vii. 4: "Trust not in lying words, saying, The temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, it is the temple of the Lord". For in the time of Jeremiah, before the Jews were taken captive, God had uttered a like threat against them, as recorded by Jeremiah (xii. 7): "I have forsaken My house, I have left My inheritance; I have given My dear soul into the hand of her enemies".

Verse 39. *For I say unto you.*

Christ tells them the reason of this coming desolation. He Himself, by whom, as by the truth, the figure was fulfilled, was after a little while to leave the world; and as a house, when its owners have left it, will fall into ruins,

so the Temple, after His departure, would be utterly destroyed.

*Till you say, Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord.*

All ancient Fathers agree that this refers to the second coming of Christ ; but all do not agree as to how the Jews will say, "Blessed is He that cometh," &c., of Him. Some of the most early think that many of the Jews will believe in Him at the end of the world, and will speak these words. S. Jerome says that the meaning is: "You shall not see Me again until you confess Me to be Him who cometh in the name of the Lord". Euthymius, Theophylact, and apparently S. Chrysostom, think that the Jews will then make that confession, not willingly, but by compulsion.

They may probably then say many things unwillingly ; but from their minds, and not from their lips alone. For Christ appears to speak as if a king should say to some one who would not acknowledge him as such, "I will put thee to death, and then thou wilt confess me to be a king," as meaning, not that the man would confess it in words, but that he would discover it to be so in fact. So *Zach.* xii. 10 and *S. John* xix. 37, where the words, "They shall look," have the same meaning as "You say" in the text. Christ probably alludes to what had happened shortly before (xxi. 16). When the children cried out "Hosanna," the Scribes said with indignation, "Hearest thou?" as if they thought the children guilty of blasphemy because they sang to Christ, "Hosanna to the Son of David". Christ therefore tells them that the time would come when they themselves would be compelled to say the same. S. Chrysostom, Theophylact, and Euthymius have observed that the word "henceforth," *amodo, ἀπ' ἄρτι*, marks, not a point of time, but the time of the Passion ; after which, although the Apostles and some of the disciples saw Him when risen, the Jews of whom He spoke did not see Him.

## CHAPTER XXIV.

CHRIST FORETELLS THE DESTRUCTION OF THE TEMPLE :  
WITH THE SIGNS THAT SHALL COME BEFORE IT,  
AND BEFORE THE LAST JUDGMENT—WE MUST  
ALWAYS WATCH.

Verse 1. *And Jesus being come out of the Temple, went away.*

*Καὶ ἐξελθὼν, et egressus.* Our translation seems to have read *καί* with a better meaning. For “Jesus being come out, went from the Temple,” appears tautological. Some Greek copies also have the reading of our version.

*And His disciples came.*

S. Mark (xiii. 1) says that one of His disciples only came, but Eustathius thinks that all the disciples spoke first among themselves about the beauty of the Temple, and then that they came to Christ, as S. Matthew says ; and that one of them said for the rest, “Master,” &c., as related by S. Mark : or that S. Matthew may have spoken by syllepsis, saying that they came to Him, because one did (as in chap. xxvi. 8) : whilst from S. *John* xii. 4 it is clear that only one murmured ; and we read in chap. xxvii. 44 that the “thieves cast the same in His teeth,” when from S. *Luke* xxiii. 30 we know that only one of the thieves blasphemed.

*To show Him the buildings.*

Origen, S. Hilary, S. Chrysostom, Theophylact, and Euthymius think, what was very probable, that they were moved by the words (xxiii. 38), “Behold, your house shall be left to you desolate,” to show Christ the Temple ; or, as

some others suggest, by admiration: for it did not seem possible that a temple so vast and splendid should be demolished; or, as others say more probably, from pity at the intolerable thought that an edifice so splendid and wonderful should be laid in ruins. They appear, as Origen says, to have wished to arouse in Christ feelings of commiseration for it, so as to induce Him to recall His sentence against it.

It was built by Herod from the foundation with incredible labour. It is described by Josephus in his *Antiquities* (xv. 14) as having been one hundred cubits in length and one hundred and twenty in height; built of very massive stones of twenty-five cubits in length, twelve in breadth, eight in height. It was this which induced the disciples to say to Christ (*S. Mark* xiii. 1): "Master, behold what manner of stones, and what buildings are here".

Verse 2. *Do you see all these things?*

*Οὐ βλέπετε, nonne videtis.* Our version does not seem to give it as a negation, and the meaning is thus more emphatic; for Christ signifies that they should contemplate the Temple again and again, that they might be the more impressed by its destruction. The words used by Christ describe a total destruction such as Josephus describes (*Antiq.*, xv. 14, and *De Bell. Jud.*, vii. 9, 10); though none may think for a moment that He used any exaggeration or hyperbole. S. Chrysostom (*Cont. Jud. Orat.*, ii. 3), S. Gregory Nazianzen (*Cont. Julianum Apostatam*), Theodoret (*Hist.*, iii. 20), tell us that Julian the Apostate permitted the Jews to rebuild the Temple, which they set about with the utmost alacrity. But when they had dug out the old foundations of the Temple to lay a new one, flames burst forth from the foundation and killed many of those who were engaged in the work. Thus the Jews fulfilled the prophecy of Christ—with their own hands

destroying the former Temple so completely, if anything remained of it, that there was left no stone upon another, while they were forbidden by divine interposition from building a new one.

Verse 3. *And when He was sitting.*

It is easily seen from a comparison of the Evangelists that this was on the fourth day after Christ's entrance into the city with the palm branches and Hosannahs. For that same day he entered Bethany. On the second, returning from Bethany, he cursed the fig-tree. On the third, when He returned again from Bethany, the disciples saw the fig-tree withered away (*S. Mark* xi. 13, 14, 21). On the same—that is, the third—day He returned, according to His custom, from Jerusalem to Bethany, that He might pass the night there (*S. Luke* xxi. 37). Thus on the fourth day He was at Bethany, both because no Evangelist says that He returned to Jerusalem on the fifth day before He celebrated the Passover, and because *S. Matthew* (xxvi. 6) says that He was in the house of Simon the leper two days before it. Bethany, as has been said, was at the foot of the Mount of Olives (xxi. 1). It is therefore probable that Christ, when He had gone up into the mount, which is little more than a mile from the city, contemplated the city and Temple from it, and uttered that prophecy of its impending destruction which prompted the disciples to say: "Lord, tell us when shall these things be?" This may be gathered from *S. Mark* xiii. 3: "And as He sat on the Mount Olivet over against the Temple," showing that He looked upon the Temple and spoke of it.

*The disciples came to Him.*

*S. Mark* says that only four came—Peter, James, John, and Andrew; and we may doubt whether the word "privately" is to be understood that those four came apart

from the rest ; or, as Euthymius thinks, that all came, but apart from the multitude. The former seems the more probable. For S. Mark appears to have stated their names ; and it is likely that those four, who were the most intimate with Christ of any, and who were used to be with Him in His most secret actions, wished to ask Him by themselves of a matter of such great consequence, thinking that He would be more likely to tell them by themselves, then, than to all the others in common. For it was hazardous to speak of the Temple. The Jews object against S. Stephen (*Acts* vi. 14) : “ For we have heard him say that this Jesus of Nazareth shall destroy this place, and shall change the traditions which Moses delivered unto us”. The Author thinks that they put this question to Christ from their desire of enjoying the reign of Christ in heaven : as if He seemed to delay it too long.

*When shall these things be, and what shall be the sign of Thy coming, and of the consummation of the world ?*

The Apostles ask three things. 1. When the ills Christ had foretold to the city and Temple would come to pass ? 2. What sign would precede His coming ? 3. What would precede the end of the world ? As S. Hilary, S. Jerome, and Strabus say, what should prevent the Apostles from being clearly taught that the coming of Christ and the end of the world would take place at the same time ? They thought, indeed, that the destruction of the Temple would happen at the same time, as shall shortly be explained. It is plain to all that questions on the destruction of the Temple and on the coming of Christ are different ones.

Verse 5. *For many will come in My name.*

The Apostles undoubtedly thought that the advent of Christ and the end of the world would come soon after the destruction of Jerusalem ; but it is doubtful whether He here

answered about His coming and the end of the world, or not. All the most ancient authors refer His words to the end of the world: as S. Irenæus (v. 25), S. Hilary (*in loc.*) and S. Gregory (*Hom. i. in Evangel.*). The others, as S. Chrysostom, Theophylact, Euthymius, understand them of the end of the world only as far as verse 23. A middle view seems the best, and such as S. Augustin also embraced (*Ep. lxxx.*; S. Jerome and Bede, *in loc.*), namely, that Christ answered both questions without order, and without regard to their sequence, as the Apostles had so asked them. He probably did this by a fixed and divine decree, that no one might know of the end of the world. For the Apostles thought that the end of the Temple and the end of the world would happen together, and Christ would not disabuse them of this mistake, that they might not grow secure by long waiting after the destruction of the Temple. Due discrimination will enable us in some degree to distinguish between what is said of the destruction of Jerusalem and of the end of the world. What Christ now said appears to apply to either. For before the destruction of Jerusalem many false Christs arose, and before the end of the world many others will do so, as S. John says in the *Apocalypse*. Whilst, therefore, we may understand His words in a general sense, we must not limit them, lest we appear to put bounds to the Holy Spirit by which Christ spoke. S. Luke tells us of Theudas (*Acts* v. 36); and Josephus (*Antiq.*, xx. 4, and *De Bell. Jud.*, ii. 12) also mentions him and other seducers of the people. S. Jerome speaks of the Simon Magus of *Acts* viii. 10, who came under the false name of Christ, being called "the great power of God". A multitude of others followed, clearly by the divine judgment, that they who would not believe in Christ as the very Son of God might believe in these seducers, as Christ Himself foretold (*S. John* v. 43, and *2 Thess.* ii. 10, 11).

Verse 6. *You shall hear.*

Μελλήσετε δὲ ἀκούειν, *audituri enim estis*, but δέ, “but,” is put for γάρ, “for”. Our version, therefore, has rendered the passage better than some more recent ones ; for Christ gives the reason of what follows, “See that ye be not troubled”: as if He had said, “I warn you not to be troubled when you hear of wars and rumours of wars”. It is a Hebraism שמועה “the hearing”; that is, “rumour”. Some appear to distinguish between “wars” and “rumours of wars” with too much subtlety. Origen and Euthymius are among them. The former thinks allegorically that “the wars” were those carried on in Jerusalem ; and “the rumours” are of such as would arise in other cities of Judæa. If there be any real difference, it may be thought that “wars” refers to the present and “rumours” to the future ; the meaning being that they should see with their own eyes many present wars, and hear with their own ears of many that were yet in the distance : war thus arising from war, and evil from evil.

*For these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet.*

This is not the case absolutely : it means the wickedness of men being supposed, and the decree of God that He would punish them (as in chap. xviii. 7 ; 1 *Cor.* xi. 19). Many—*e.g.*, S. Chrysostom and S. Hilary, The Author, Euthymius, Theophylact, and Bede—understand it of the wars which preceded the destruction of Jerusalem, which Josephus has described in his *Antiq.*, xx., and his seven books, *De Bell. Jud.* Others, as S. Jerome, take it of the wars of Antichrist, which shall be before the end of the world. Either is possible : as the former can be established by the facts of history, and the latter from the *Apocalypse*; and, as said before, when the words can be taken in a general sense, they are not to be narrowed in meaning.

*But the end is not yet.*

S. Jerome and Theophylact think that this “end” is the



end of the world. Euthymius and others, that it refers to the destruction of Jerusalem.

Verse 7. *For nation shall rise against nation.*

S. Augustin (*Ep.* lxxx.) refers this both to the destruction of Jerusalem and to the times of Antichrist. His opinion seems preferable to that of those who refer it only to the destruction of Jerusalem, as S. Chrysostom, Euthymius, and Theophylact. Many other examples to the same effect may be found in Josephus (*Antiq.*, lib. xx., caps. vii., viii., xv. ; and *De Bell. Jud.*, xi., xii., xiv., xix., xx., xxi., xxv.), and in Hegesippus (lib. ii., caps. xi., xiv., xvi., xvii.).

*And there shall be pestilences and famines.*

From the *Acts* (xi. 28) and Josephus (*Antiq.*, xx. 2) we learn that there were famines before the taking of Jerusalem.

Verse 8. *Now all these are the beginnings of sorrows.*

That is, they are light compared with those which were to follow. It is a metaphor from the travail of women, such as is often found in Scripture (*Ps.* xlvii. 7 ; *Isa.* xiii. 7, 8 ; *Jer.* iv. 31 ; *Ezek.* xxx. 16 ; *Osee* xiii. 13 ; *Mich.* iv. 9, 10 ; and the Prophets, *passim*).

Verse 12. *And because iniquity hath abounded the charity of many shall grow cold.*

Even those who had been used to receive the Apostles and disciples of Christ with charity, and assist them, would be terrified by the cruelties and persecutions practised generally against them, and their hearts would grow cold. This is the iniquity here spoken of as abounding ; for scarce anyone would be found, even among Christians, to give them aid or protection, lest he should be suspected himself of being a Christian. An example in proof of this is found

in the history of S. Paul in his second Epistle to Timothy (iv. 16).

Verse 14. *And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world.*

S. Jerome and Bede conclude from these words that the subject is not the destruction of the city and Temple, but the end of the world ; because it is said the Gospel should be first preached in the whole world ; which evidently neither was done, nor could have been done, before the taking of Jerusalem. S. Chrysostom and Theophylact, however, persist in their opinion that the reference is only and wholly to the taking of Jerusalem ; and many of the moderns have followed them. They say, in support of their opinion, that the Gospel had been preached to the whole world before Jerusalem was taken : as S. Paul bears witness (*Rom.* i. 8). But the Gospel had certainly not been preached in many parts of the world ; for even in our fathers' time there had been no knowledge of it in more than a quarter of the globe ; and S. Augustin testifies in his eightieth Epistle that in his day many natives of Africa had neither received nor heard of it. This is true ; but the answer is that the words of S. Paul, and Christ Himself, are somewhat hyperbolical, and that the Gospel in truth had only been preached in most places. For when Jerusalem was taken there was scarcely a region of the then known world where the Gospel had not been heard.

*And shall be preached.*

Some think that the word "and" here has a disjunctive force, as is frequently the case with the Hebrew, and that the meaning is : "Although all these things shall come to pass, yet this shall be no obstacle to the Gospel being preached ; for it shall make its own way through all hindrances". So say Theophylact and Euthymius. It would

appear to mean that although all the calamities which Christ had foretold should happen at the destruction of Jerusalem, yet it must not be supposed that the end of the world has therefore arrived ; for the Gospel must first be preached throughout it, as S. Mark more clearly states (xiii. 10) : "Unto all nations the Gospel must first be preached" ; that is, before the end of the world. It is called the Gospel of the Kingdom, because the kingdom of heaven is said to be at hand, as in chaps. iii. 2, iv. 17, x. 7, as there explained.

*For a testimony to all nations.*

Christ here signifies that the Gospel is to be preached to all nations, that no one may have any plea of ignorance to urge against his being condemned, and that this might be a testimony at the last judgment against those who have either not received or who have not kept it ; as S. Chrysostom and others explain, and chaps. viii. 4 and x. 18 state.

*And then shall the consummation come.*

S. Chrysostom and Theophylact think that the reference is to the taking and destruction of Jerusalem. S. Jerome, Bede, and all the more ancient authorities take it of the end of the world, which appears more probable ; for we can easily believe that Christ answered the question of the Apostles. This was : "What should be the sign of the end of the world ?" (verse 3).

Christ answered that the Gospel should be preached to all parts of the world, and then should come the end. S. Jerome understands, therefore, the end of the world, of which the Apostles had asked Him. But the meaning does not appear to be that which S. Jerome thinks : that the preaching of the Gospel throughout the world was to be a certain sign of the end of the world being at hand ; for we have no sure sign, and to take this were to narrow Christ's meaning too much.

The meaning appears to be, that the end of the world would not be before the Gospel had been preached throughout all parts of the world. It is certain that the Gospel will be preached to all nations. It is not certain that when it has been preached, the end will immediately come.

Verse 15. *When you see the abomination.*

S. Irenæus (v. 25), S. Hilary, and The Author (*in loc.*) refer this also to the end of the world. S. Jerome and Bede cannot oppose this opinion, although they do not wholly approve it ; and some of it may apply to the times of Antichrist, as in *Dan.* xii. 11, and as S. Paul signifies to the Thessalonians (2 *Thess.* ii. 4). But although Christ here looked on perhaps to the time of Antichrist, we cannot doubt that He spoke of the destruction of Jerusalem ; and none but Calvin and his followers have ever doubted it.

It is of consequence to the understanding of the passage to know whence this testimony was taken ; for Daniel speaks in two places of the future abomination (ix. 27 and xii. 11). Calvin says that they who think it taken from the former passage are in error, but the error is his who thinks it taken from the latter ; for, as we have shown on that passage, Daniel does not speak of Antiochus and Titus and Vespasian, but of Antichrist, and in chap. ix. he so unites the abomination in the Temple with the death of Christ that it cannot be doubted that he speaks of the destruction of the Temple, which followed so very shortly after the death of Christ.

It is a graver question, What is that abomination of which Christ speaks ? The authorities who have been cited as referring the prophecy to the time of Antichrist think that it was Antichrist himself who, as S. Paul says, would sit in the Temple and profane it (2 *Thess.* ii. 4). S. Jerome gives two other opinions as well, both of which he thinks equally probable : one, that the statue

of Cæsar, which Pilate had placed in the Temple, was so called ; the other, that it was the statue of Adrian, which was placed there afterwards. Neither opinion seems probable ; for Pilate did not place the statue of Cæsar in the Temple, but brought it into the city alone, and that secretly, in the dead of night, and with a military force, and it only remained a few days ; for Pilate, overcome by the prayers of the Jews, removed the soldiers (Josephus, *Antiq.*, xviii. 5 ; *De Bell. Jud.*, ii. 8). When Christ said these words, too, the deed had been done some time. This could not possibly, therefore, have been the abomination. Still less could it have been the statue of Adrian, for he lived long after the taking of Jerusalem ; and Christ spoke of the abomination as the sign of a coming destruction.

Some think that the term abomination was applied to the Roman army which besieged Jerusalem. Origen says this (*Tract.* xxix.) ; and many moderns, apparently with some reason, have adopted his opinion from what Christ said in this place : “ When, therefore, you shall see the abomination ” ; and S. Luke (xxi. 20) : “ When you see Jerusalem compassed about with an army, then know that the desolation thereof is at hand ”.

But it does not seem probable that the Roman army is called the abomination here, because Christ added, “ Standing in the holy place,” and S. Mark (xiii. 14), “ Standing where it ought not ” (by which description I doubt not that the Temple is intended, as Daniel says, in express terms) ; for the Roman army never stood in the Temple until after the city had been taken and plundered by Titus, when, as Josephus says, the Temple itself was burnt. The army, therefore, could not be the sign of the destruction of the Temple and the city ; and when Christ said, “ Standing in the holy place,” and “ Standing where it ought not,” He seemed to allude to a statue.

It seems probable that Christ uttered the words both of

S. Matthew and of S. Luke, and that S. Matthew gave some and S. Luke the others. S. Augustin (*De Cons.*, ii. 77) appears to be of this opinion. Euthymius certainly is so.

Others think that the reference is to the sedition among the Jews, which took place under Florus, and of which the Zelotæ, as they were called, were the authors, when they betook themselves to the Temple and profaned it (Josephus, *De Bell. Jud.*, vi. 1). This sedition took place before the destruction of Jerusalem ; but it can hardly be what Christ meant.

S. Chrysostom, Euthymius, and Theophylact say that the statue of the Emperor Titus was placed in the Temple, and that this was the abomination. But there is no author of credit to be vouched for the assertion ; for Josephus, who was living at the time, says nothing of it.

In a matter of such uncertainty the most probable explanation seems to be that the abomination of desolation meant the desolation itself, and that it is a Hebrew expression to express a dreadful and terrible desolation, as S. Paul (2 *Thess.* ii. 10) speaks of "the operation of error," that is, that working and operative error which draws men into destruction.

There is one thing against this view—that Christ speaks of a sign of a future desolation of which the desolation itself cannot be a sign. The answer may be that it was not Christ's intention to teach by these words when the Temple was to be destroyed. He said this in other words (*S. Luke* xxi. 20) ; but He would have them admonished that when they saw that abomination and desolation of the city and Temple they should understand that the prophecy of Daniel was fulfilled, that the sacrifice was taken away, and the ruin of the Jewish people completed, and that the city and Temple should never be built again as they were after the captivity of Babylon, and the sacrifices should be no more renewed, but the Law should be utterly done

away, as Daniel had foretold. Thus the two verses, 15th and 16th, are not to be joined as some join them, but the whole sentence ends with verse 15, nor depends at all upon the one that follows, "When you see," &c., as even Euthymius thinks. It does not seem correct to take these, as so many do, as the words of the Evangelist, and to include them in a parenthesis.

Verse 16. *Then.*

All the authorities understand this word "and," as applying to those, "When you see the abomination of desolation". It may be referable not merely to the words of the verse immediately preceding, but to the entire preceding text from the sixth verse, as if Christ had said, "When you hear of wars and rumours of wars, and see all the other signs of the coming destruction that I have described, then let those that are in Judæa flee to the mountains". In these words Christ foretells the destruction of the Jews, and He speaks of their fleeing to the mountains as people do when there is any terror upon them, and they betake themselves to the mountains and inaccessible places, as in *Gen. xix. 17*. The angels said to Lot when they commanded him to flee from the city of Sodom, "Save thyself in the mountain". Christ perhaps alluded to this, for He spoke with His disciples and good men, whom He wished to escape the destruction of Jerusalem, as Lot from Sodom. Eusebius says (*Hist.*, iii. 5) that the Christians who were in the city then received divine warning to escape. But the other Jews, who not only did not believe in Christ, but even persecuted Him, not only received no such warning, but came into the city from all parts of Judæa, partly for fear, and partly for the sake of the Paschal Feast, and were shut up in it and slaughtered like victims, as Eusebius says again.

The rest to verse 19 means simply that a great and sudden evil would overtake them, and that the fugitives

should make no delay, even in taking away what they valued most, and that which was necessary for their flight ; that is (verse 17), he that is on the housetop, let him not come down. The roofs of the houses in Palestine are flat (x. 20), and as the Jews used to sup and walk on them, Christ warns them that if any, at the time of this visitation, be upon the housetop, they should not come down to take money or any other necessary for their flight, but, by leaping or climbing or flying, escape the quickest way they could ; as Lot when fleeing from Sodom was commanded not to look back, that is, to get away without delay. God often speaks thus by His Prophets, as in *Jer.* xlv. 5 ; xlviii. 6 ; xlix. 8.

Verse 19. *And woe to them who are with child, and that give suck in those days.*

Origen thinks the meaning of this woe upon these women was that the cruelty of the enemy would be so great that they would have no regard even for pregnant and suckling women. We find the like aggravated inhumanity of enemies in other places ; as in 4 *Kings* viii. 12, which was fulfilled (xv. 16), and *Amos* i. 13. Theophylact thinks that this, which is described by Josephus (vii. 8, *De Bell. Jud.*) as having happened at the siege of Jerusalem, was said to foreshow, that nursing mothers would be compelled to eat their children. But S. Hilary, Chrysostom, Jerome, The Author, Bede, and Theophylact himself, elsewhere, that it was said because such women would not be able to fly ; as it immediately follows (verse 20): "Pray that your flight be not in winter, nor on the Sabbath day".

Christ might have named the lame, the halt, the impotent, and others, who were little prepared for flight ; but the mention of these women would seem rather to show that He mentioned, not only those who were hindered from flying, but also those who were living apparently in the utmost enjoyment and security.



Verse 20. *But pray that your flight be not in winter or on the Sabbath.*

Christ said this for the same reason as He said above to the women, "Woe to them"; for the winter and the Sabbath were as little favourable to flight as women in the above condition—the winter, from its inclemency, and the Sabbath, because the Jews were forbidden to travel on that day more than a mile, or, at the most, two. So say S. Augustin (*Quest. Ev.*, i. 37), S. Jerome, The Author, S. Chrysostom, Theophylact, Euthymius, Bede, S. Gregory (*In Evangel.*, *Hom.* xii.). But S. Chrysostom, Euthymius, and Theophylact object that by this Christ appears to approve the observance of the Sabbath, which He had either wholly done away, or at the time of the destruction of Jerusalem intended to do away. They reply that Christ spoke according to the custom and feeling of the Jews, who would still observe the Sabbath, though after the preaching of the Gospel they ought not to have done so. They were worthy of double blame: first, as being still held by superstition; and secondly, because it hindered them from attempting their flight.

Verse 23. *Then.*

This word "then" has not the same meaning as in verse 16, for it does not signify the immediate time, but that which would pass between the taking of Jerusalem and the end of the world, as S. Chrysostom, S. Jerome, The Author, Theophylact, and Euthymius have observed. So S. Matthew (iii. 1), "In those days cometh John the Baptist, preaching in the desert of Judæa," when he came thirty years after.

Christ therefore passes from the end and destruction of Jerusalem to the end of the world. For the destruction of Jerusalem was a figure and type of the destruction and end of the world; according to the saying: *Quod fit in circulo fit in cælo.*

Christ here appears to intend to teach that He only was the promised Messenger, and that if any man should say, "Lo, here is Christ, or lo, there," he is not to be believed; for there is only one Christ, who has already come, nor is any other to be looked for, and whoever says hereafter that he is Christ is a liar. Eusebius (*Hist.*, iv. 6) says that many such had come, and S. John, again, foretells that many would come; and many do come, to our cost, every day, for all heretics are such. Christ says of these, in warning, "Believe them not". For whoever should pretend to be Christ after Him would not be Christ, but Anti-christ. So every mystical body, except the Body of Christ Himself, which is the Church, however it may feign itself to be the Church, is not the Church, but the synagogue of Satan; that is, it is not the Body of Christ, but of Anti-christ.

Verse 24. *And shall show great signs and wonders.*

On these miracles of the false prophets, see chap. vii. 22. Christ does not say that all who should work miracles were false prophets, but that they were not necessarily to be taken therefore for true, and that they who preach another Christ, although they work great miracles, are not to be believed. For they do not preach the same Christ who do not preach the same Church. For the Church is the Body of Christ. Christ warns us in no way to believe in heretics, even if they do work miracles.

*Insomuch as to deceive if possible even the elect.*

Christ, when He said "if possible," showed that it was, in fact, impossible. But, granted the doctrine of divine predestination, we cannot conclude its immovableness and certainty from these words.

Christ speaks, not of every kind of error, but, so to speak, of final error. For the elect may often be led into error, but they cannot die in it, as in *Prov.* xxiv. 16; and S.

Luke (xvii. 20, 21), says that Christ, when asked by the Pharisees, replied, "The kingdom of heaven cometh, not with observation," &c. He means to teach them that His coming would be so sudden that it could not be foreknown by celestial signs, as the rain and other phenomena are foreseen; and that men therefore ought not to observe the heavens, but to practise their minds in holiness and virtue: "For behold the kingdom of heaven is within you". He here mentioned those outward signs, because they might, unless warned beforehand, perplex the minds even of the elect.

Verse 26. *If, therefore, they shall say to you: Behold, he is in the desert, go not out. Behold, he is in the closet, believe it not.*

Christ speaks of two opposite places, the desert and the closet, the most secret and private part of the house, to show that in whatever manner, in whatever garb, in whatever place, another Christ may come, they are not to believe him.

Verse 27. *For as the lightning cometh out of the East.*

Christ compares His second coming to lightning, because as lightning bursts out suddenly and unexpectedly, and no one can foretell by observation at what moment it will break out of the clouds, so He will come suddenly and when we least expect Him; and as lightning in one moment shines forth from the East to the West, so will He come, so splendid and glorious, that no one but must see Him. So SS. Hilary, Jerome, Chrysostom, The Author, and Euthymius explain it.

Verse 28. *Wheresoever the body shall be.*

The Greek is τὸ πτώμα, "the carcase," a word better suited to the metaphor used by Christ. S. Ambrose, in his commentary on Ps. xlviii., renders the word by *ruina*, and it

is so used, as observed, on *Ps.* cix. 6. For eagles and vultures fly to carcases. It is a Hebrew proverb apparently, as may be concluded from *Job* xxxix. 30. Christ therefore compares Himself to the carcase, as He had previously done to the lightning ; and says, when He appears, He cannot be hid, as the carcase cannot escape the eagle, but wherever it is the eagles find it, as by some natural instinct.

Who they are whom Christ compares to the eagle is not certain. S. Irenæus (iv. 28) and Bede (*in loc.*) think that the allusion is to the blessed who enjoy Christ now, and who will enjoy Him before the Judgment, because they fly very high, and follow Christ wherever He goes, and will come with Him to the judgment. S. Hilary and The Author understand the saints, who, when Christ comes, will be found alive, and who, as S. Paul says (1 *Thess.* iv. 16), will be taken up to meet Christ in the air. S. Chrysostom and Euthymius understand the angels and holy martyrs, with whom Christ will come. Others, as Theophylact and Bede, take them to be all men. This seems more likely ; for Christ signifies that all men will fly together to where He is, to be judged : like eagles to the carcase, and, *velint nolint*, they will see Him.

Verse 29. *The sun shall be darkened.*

Whether the sun will be actually darkened is not quite sure ; most likely it will be, as Origen and S. Hilary seem to conclude. How it will be darkened is a further question. Origen thinks that the world will be burnt up, and that the smoke of its conflagration will be so great as to obscure the sun.

Others think that it will be darkened by the surpassing glory and brightness of Christ's appearance, like the stars when the sun rises. So say S. Hilary, S. Chrysostom, S. Jerome, Theophylact, and Euthymius ; as *Isa.* xxiv. 23. Some say that clouds will intervene. Some heretical

teachers say that the sun will not be actually darkened, but that men will be so astonished that they will not be able to see the sun ; for the Prophets in similar visitations say that the sun will be darkened (*Isa.* xiii. 9, 10 ; xxxiv. 4 ; *Jer.* xv. 9 ; *Amos* viii. 9 ; *Ezek.* xxxii. 7, 8 ; *Joel* ii. 10, 30, 31 ; iii. 14, 15.)

My own belief, like that of the Author, is that it will be darkened, neither in man's opinion, nor by the interposition of any object, but that it will be darkened :

1. Because we believe that it was to be darkened in the same way at His Advent as at His Death. We read that at the latter it was truly darkened.

2. Because to be darkened in any other way seems too little ; for it is plain that Christ said that a great thing, such as had never been seen before, would happen when, on His coming to judgment, the sun himself and all the stars should quake, and, as if struck with fear, withdraw their light, as men turn pale from fright. In this way the sun was darkened at the Passion of Christ, as if it trembled at the sight of the death of God.

*And the stars shall fall from heaven.*

There is the same question about the falling of the stars from heaven : whether they will really fall or not. Origen (*Tract.* xxx. on *S. Matt.*) says that they will not actually fall from heaven, but that they will lose their light, and what is earthly in them will fall to earth. This savours of Platonism. S. Jerome and Bede think that they will fall in the same manner as that in which the sun will be darkened, because they will not shine in the brightness of Christ. Some of the Ancients think that it will not be the actual stars, but evil angels, of which the air is full, and who are described by the name of stars, and who will fall. Others, more modern, take them not for real stars, but for what are called comets. It is the opinion of many that

they will not fall in fact, but, from not shining, will appear to fall. This seems no way credible, because Christ said, as of the sun and moon, that they should not give their light, and now when He says that they shall fall He seems undoubtedly to mean something greater; and so say S. Chrysostom and Euthymius, who therefore appear to be correct when they affirm that the stars will truly fall.

*And the powers of heaven shall be moved.*

The moderns almost universally explain the powers of heaven to be the stars, the host of heaven, as they are called. But Christ declared that the stars should fall, which is more than being moved, so that He can hardly be thought to have spoken in this passage of the stars. The Ancients—Origen, S. Chrysostom, Bede, Euthymius, Theophylact—say that the angels are called the powers of heaven, as in the annual Church hymn they are called “the powers of heaven and the heavens”; so that the meaning will be, the angels themselves will be astonished, and, as it were, will be shaken with amazement. It always seemed to me that the powers of heaven here spoken of were those whom Job by figure calls “the poles of heaven” (xxii. 14); Moses (*Deut.* xxx. 4, and 1 *Kings* ii. 8), “poles of the earth”. By another metaphor they are termed “the poles of the world” (*Prov.* viii. 26) and “the ends of the sea” (*Job* xxxvi. 30), by which he meant only the firmament and its strength, as the word “powers” itself expresses. Christ, therefore, teaches that those poles and, as it were, the foundations of heaven shall be shaken for fear, as S. Peter says (2 *Eph.* iii. 10).

Verse 30. *Then shall appear the sign of the Son of man.*

Authorities differ as to what this sign was. Origen thinks that it means the power and glory which Christ gained for Himself on the Cross, which he thinks is meant

by the "sign of the Son of man"; so that the meaning is that all shall see Christ coming with so great glory and majesty as to render it impossible to doubt that He was the true Judge. In the same manner S. Jerome and Bede understand the banner of the victory of Christ. But The Author understands the signs of the Passion, as the marks of the stripes, the cicatrices, wounds of the nails, which he says are to be called the sign of the Son of man. It has been the common opinion that the Cross was called the sign of the Son of man, and that that should appear at His coming, in heaven or in the air, as His standard. So say S. Chrysostom, S. Jerome, Bede, Euthymius, and Theophylact, and it seems very probable. For Christ spoke of the sign of the Son of man as some certain and well-known sign, which the Cross alone can be.

*Then.*

When they shall see the sign of the Son of man : as if He had said all the tribes of the earth should mourn, for they shall see the sign of the Son of man and be terrified.

*Shall mourn.*

That is, they shall beat their breasts for grief and repentance, but too late.

*All tribes of the earth.*

Some individuals from all : for the good will not mourn, but rather rejoice, because "they love His coming," as S. Paul says (2 *Tim.* iv. 8).

*They shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven.*

That is, of the air. Christ describes Himself as God, whose prerogative it is to come with glory and majesty and terror, as in *Ps.* xlix. 3 ; ciii. 3. Christ was taken up in a cloud into heaven (*Acts* i. 9), and in the same way, as the angels said to the Apostles (verse 11), He will come again.

Verse 31. *And He shall send His angels.*

When Christ says that He will send His angels and calls them "His," He shows himself to be God ; for this is the prerogative of God (*Ps. ciii. 4*).

*With a trumpet and a great voice.*

Christ is always said to be about to come with a trumpet (as in *1 Cor. xv. 52* ; *1 Thess. iv. 15*): not only because men are to be summoned to judgment by a trumpet, but because a trumpet is the sign of kingly majesty ; for a trumpet is sounded before kings when they come to a place.

Of what nature the trumpet was to be—whether an actual or figurative trumpet—neither can nor need be known ; but it is probable that it will be but the latter, and that a voice, loud, deep, far-sounding, dreadful, and like a trumpet in sound, is here called a trumpet ; as S. John in the *Apocalypse* (i. 10 ; iv. 1 ; xix. 6) says that he heard in that vision of the last judgment which he saw. When Christ says, therefore, "with a trumpet and a great voice," it is the same as if He had said, "with a trumpet," that is, "a great voice," the word "and" being here, as in many other places, exegetical.

In confirmation of this, many Greek copies have *μετὰ σάλπιγγος φωνῆς μεγάλης*, *cum tuba vocis magnæ*, as Eustathius reads it, or *cum tuba magna*, as S. Chrysostom ; for Christ describes not two things, but only one. So *Isa. lviii. 1* : "Cry aloud, cease not ; lift up thy voice like a trumpet".

It is matter of doubt whose that voice is or what it signifies. S. John (v. 25) says that it will be the voice of Christ Himself, as also Joel had said (ii. 11). But S. John (in *Rev. viii. 6, ix. 1, 13, and xi. 15*) mentions angels as using the trumpet at the judgment ; and S. Paul (*1 Thess. iv. 15*) says that it will be the voice of an archangel. It is very likely, therefore, that both Christ will speak with a loud voice to send His angels, and that the angels and



archangels and the other heavenly powers will utter a sound like the sound of a trumpet. It is not to be thought that the voice of Christ Himself is called a trumpet, because He spoke, without doubt, after the manner and custom of men. Kings do not ordinarily sound the trumpet, but their attendants.

Some think the figure taken from the assemblies of the Jews, who used to be called together by the sound of a trumpet, as in *Numb.* x. 2 ; *Isa.* xviii. 3 ; and *supra*, chap. vi. 2. It may be so, but it was probably a similitude derived from war ; for the trumpet is not only used for peaceful assemblies, but also for martial ones, to terrify the enemy, as in *Isa.* xviii. 3 ; *Sophonias* i. 16, 17 ; *Zach.* ix. 14.

Verse 32. *And from the fig-tree learn a parable.*

So *S. Luke* xxi. 29, 30 : " And He spake to them a similitude : See the fig-tree and all the trees ; when they now shoot forth their fruit, you know that summer is nigh ". It is probable that Christ used the words of both Evangelists.

Verse 34. *This generation.*

Many Catholics, as well as teachers of heresy, and some of the highest antiquity, have explained this of an age, as if the meaning were, that before the age of men then living should be ended Jerusalem would be destroyed. Origen calls them simple. *S. Chrysostom*, *Theophylact*, *Euthymius*, and *The Author* explain it of the generation of faithful men, as if Christ had said, " Although calamities, so many and so great, are about to happen, yet the Church shall not perish to the end of the world ". *S. Jerome*, however, understood the whole human race as if the meaning were, " Before the human race is ended, all these things which Christ has foretold shall come to pass ". But the whole world would seem to be called a generation, as it is elsewhere called a creature, as being wholly created and

generated. And thus the meaning of the verse would seem to be, that what Christ foretold was so certain to come to pass, that the world will not be ended before it has been fulfilled. This is clearly to be concluded from the words that follow : " Heaven and earth shall pass, but My words shall not pass ". They, therefore, who have taken an age to be the meaning of generation have marred the whole text.

Verse 35. *Heaven and earth shall pass.*

This is a Hebraism, meaning that they should pass away as to their present state, "but My words shall not pass"—shall not fail nor prove false.

Verse 36. *But of the day and hour no one knoweth, no, not the angels in heaven, but the Father alone.*

It cannot be doubted that the Son of man is also excluded from this knowledge, as S. Mark (xiii. 32) says, in plain words, "Of that day or hour no man knoweth, neither the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but the Father". This passage, therefore, proved a great battle-field in the contest between the Catholics and Arians—the latter taking it as a great authority for the denial of the Divinity of our Lord. Some of their opponents were content to say that the passage was corrupt. Among these were S. Jerome (*in loc.*) and S. Ambrose (*De Fide*, v. 8). Others said that Christ did not indeed know the day of judgment as long as He was in this life, but that He would know it as soon as He had ascended to the Father. So Origen (*Tract. xxx. on S. Matt.*) said that, when Christ said this, it meant that He did not know the day then, but that after the Pentecost He would know it, because He then would have been made a King or Judge by the Father. There were certain heretics known as Agnoëtæ, because they held that Christ knew not the day of judgment, as S. John Damascus in-

forms us. But, as he says further, they attributed ignorance both to the divine and human natures of Christ, simply and without any distinction, because they believed that the Divinity would be changed into the humanity. Most of the ancient Fathers held that Christ did not know the day of judgment, not as being really ignorant of it, but because He would not have us know what He did not please to reveal to us, what His Body—that is, the Church—did not know, and what He dissembled His knowledge of. These opinions all come to the same thing, and the Ancients sometimes speak one way and sometimes another (Origen, *Tract. xxx. on S. Matt.*; S. Chrysostom, *Hom. lxxviii. on S. Matt.* and *xiv. on S. Mark*; S. Augustin, *Lib. Quæst.*, lxxxiii., q. 61, *De Trin.*, lib. i. 12, and *De Genes. cont. Manich.*, xxiii.; S. Gregory, lib. viii., cap. xlii.; S. Jerome, Bede, Theophylact, *In Comm., in loc.*).

Others say that He was ignorant of that day—that is, He had not yet found it. Origen (as above), Epiphanius (*Hær.*, lxix.), S. Chrysostom (*Hom. de Trin.*), Euthymius, and others say that the Son does not know unless the Father knows; but because the Father knows, therefore the Son knows.

But all these opinions appear inharmonious. For they who ascribe ignorance to Christ, either always or for a time, are to be rejected at once, being refuted by the whole of the Holy Scriptures, and by S. Paul most especially, as in *Col.* ii. 3.

As to the common idea of Christ not knowing it, because He has not revealed it to us, it seems to be supported by no basis of probability, because in that way the Father also must be ignorant, because He did not reveal it to us; and, by the same argument, the opinion of Origen and Epiphanius would be disproved, that Christ did not know the day of judgment, because He had not proved it. For the Father had not done so.

Many ancient authors—S. Athanasius (*Cont. Arian.*, *Serm.* iv.), S. Ambrose (*De Fide*, v. 8), S. Gregory Nazianzen (*Orat.* iv. *de Theolog.*), Theodoret, and The Author—openly taught that Christ as man did not know the day of judgment, and meant to say so in this place. This seems at first sight detestable, but if understood rightly, it may bear a true meaning. But it must first be remembered that Christ, as God, can be ignorant of nothing, and, moreover, as man, He could be ignorant neither of the day of judgment, nor of anything else; but the difficulty is, that when we say that Christ, as He is man, is ignorant of the day of judgment, the word “as” must be taken as having either a specific or a causal meaning. If the former, the sense will be that Christ, in His human intellect, does not know the day of judgment: which is in no sense the truth, for not only His divine, but also His human nature knows it; for in Him, as S. Paul says, are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge (*Col.* ii. 3). If taken in the latter sense, the meaning will be that Christ does not know the day of judgment, as He is man, but because God is man; for if He had been man only, however perfect and however pleasing to God, He would not have known it. For the angels do not know it, who are most perfect and most pleasing to God. Christ, therefore, does not deny that, even as man, He knows that day: but that He knows it *eo titulo*, that He is man. It is certain that, not only the Son of man denies that He knows the day of judgment, but He also affirms that the Father alone knows it, by which, not only is the Son excluded, but the Holy Ghost also.

Christ seems to speak in the same manner as that in which He said (xx. 23), “To sit on My right hand is not Mine to give to you, but to them for whom it is prepared by My Father”. He thus shows that, not only as man, but

also as God, He is in some way ignorant of the day of judgment: not that He does not know it, but that it is not His office to know it; as He did not say, "for whom it is prepared by *Me*," but "by My Father". Not that it was not prepared by Him, but because to prepare the kingdom—that is, to predestinate—was not His office, but the Father's. So it is the office of the Father also to determine when the world shall be dissolved, and when the day of judgment is to be, as He said to the Apostles (*Acts* i. 7): "It is not for you to know the times or moments which the Father hath put in His own power". For the Father alone is said to know. And this appears to be the true meaning.

Verse 37. *As in the days of Noe.*

That is, "What happened in the time of Noe will happen at My coming," as explained in the verses following.

Verse 40. *One shall be taken, and one shall be left.*

That is, one shall be chosen out and saved, and the other reprobated and lost. So S. Jerome and Theophylact explain it.

S. Luke relates the same conversation, but appears to place it at a different time, and on a different occasion; but, as Euthymius thinks, Christ may have said the same thing twice, at different times.

Verse 43. *At what hour the thief would come.*

Ποία φυλακὴ ὁ κλέπτης ἔρχεται, *qua vigilia fur venit*, "at what watch". Our version has expressed the sense, though I think that Christ, without a reason, said, "in what watch," for He had said just before, "Watch"—that is, keep guard like soldiers. The allusion is to the military custom of keeping watch throughout the night, to guard against any surprise of the enemy. On the four night watches, *vid.* chap. xiv. 15.

Verse 45. *To give them meat in due season.*

That is, to give to each servant his due allowance. S. Luke said, To give them their measure of wheat in due season (xii. 42). The allusion is to the custom of servants, over whom the most trustworthy one was placed to govern them, and give them their meat according to their desert; money payments being rare, they received portions of corn in proportion to their work done.

Verse 51. *And shall separate him.*

These words have been taken to allude to a supposed Jewish custom of cutting criminals in half, as in *Dan.* xiii. 55, 59, and *1 Kings* xv. 33. This was a manner of punishment among the Romans, as we learn from A. Gellius (xx. 1), but not among the Jews, who, as has been said on verses 22, 23, had but four kinds of punishment, of which this was not one, and it does not agree with the meaning of the present passage. Some have taken the meaning to be, that he shall be deprived of his promised good and reward. So S. Hilary (*in loc.*), Origen, and Theophylact say that it was the loss of his original grace and favour. The true meaning is that which is given by S. Jerome, Euthymius, and The Author. He shall cast him out of his family; cut him off from the society of his fellow-servants; as before (xxii. 12, 13), the king commanded the man who had not on a wedding-garment to be cast out of the banqueting-room, and thrust into outer darkness. Two punishments are therefore mentioned: (1) deprivation of the office which had been abused; (2) the being cast into the place of torment where wicked servants are sent.

*And appoint his portion.*

Christ, after the manner of the Hebrews, calls the man's unhappy condition a portion. So *Job* xx. 29; xxvii. 13; *Ps.* x. 7. The word is used in a good sense (*Ps.* xv. 5; lxxii. 26).

*With the hypocrites.*

Christ calls the slothful and negligent servants hypocrites (*vid.* chap. xxv. 26, 30). He gives them this name, because such servants work only in the presence of the master, and are, as S. Paul says to the Ephesians, "eye-servers" (vi. 6), caring less to be good servants than to appear such. Of such sort are they who are sent to the place of torture. Christ in these words alludes to hell, which is the place of the slothful, as appears from the words that follow: "There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth". On this, see chap. xiii. 42.

## CHAPTER XXV.

### THE PARABLE OF THE TEN VIRGINS, AND OF THE TALENTS—THE DESCRIPTION OF THE LAST JUDG- MENT.

Verse 1. *Then.*

“THEN,” when the Lord shall appear suddenly. The meaning depends on the former chapter. He teaches the same thing in the two parables of the Ten Virgins and the Talents ; the same thing in the parable of the Servant (xxiv. 45), &c.

*Shall be like.*

That is, what does not appear now, while the good are joined with the evil in the Church, will appear then. The same thing takes place in the kingdom of heaven, that is, the Church ; as if the ten virgins received the lamps to go out to meet the bridegroom, as explained chap. xv. 16. To what the whole parable tends is clear from the conclusion (verse 13), that we ought always to watch, always to be ready, as the Lord will come in an hour we know not of ; and always to prepare by good works for His presence. The argument of the last chapter is followed up in this.

The parable consists of fifteen portions :

1. The Bridegroom, who, beyond doubt, is Christ, as has been explained chaps. ix. 15 ; xxii. 2. The words, “and the bride,” are not found in the Greek, nor do S. Basil, S. Chrysostom, Theophylact, or Euthy-



mius read them, but they are found in Origen, S. Hilary, S. Augustin, and the Syriac. They should, therefore, be read : if not of necessity, yet on account of their antiquity, and the authority of the above early Fathers. S. John (*Apoc.* xxi. 2) shows that the Church triumphant, like a bride, will come forth with Christ to judgment.

2. The second part of the parable is the Ten Virgins, on which there is a threefold question : (1) Why they were virgins ; (2) Why the kingdom of heaven is compared to *ten* ; (3) What the virgins signify.

Origen and others think that the kingdom of heaven is compared to virgins rather than to others, to signify the integrity of faith, which has its parallel in purity of the body. S. Chrysostom, Theophylact, and Euthymius say, that as virginity is the highest point of perfection, so Christ declares that no one ought to trust to his own good, because not all virgins, though of the most spotless purity, entered into the marriage, that is, the kingdom of heaven. Others, more modern, whose opinion seems preferable, say that the kingdom of heaven is specially compared to virgins only, because it was the custom of virgins before others to carry torches and to conduct the bride and bridegroom to their house.

As to the number ten, S. Jerome, S. Augustin, and others say that it shows the five senses ; they who rule them well being wise, and they who do otherwise foolish. So say S. Jerome and Bede (*in loc.*), S. Augustin (*Ep.* cxx. 33), S. Gregory (*Hom.* xii. *in Evang.*). Thus there are ten. It would rather appear that this number was chosen to show a great number of persons, and that universality was meant. So *Gen.* xxxi. 7, 41 ; *Levit.* xxvi. 26 ; *Numb.* xiv. 22. Thus the kingdom of heaven is said to be like ten, that is, to many. By ten virgins, S. Chrysostom, Theophylact, Euthymius, S. Augustin, S. Gregory, as cited above, think that all who were truly virgins are meant, but this is too

forced a sense, perhaps. S. Hilary and The Author, on the contrary, hold that all mankind are intended, the faithful and unbelieving alike, with a meaning perhaps too extended ; Origen and S. Jerome (*in loc.*), and, as appears, S. Ambrose (*Serm. xiv. on Ps. cxviii.*), neither of all men, nor of virgins alone, but of all the faithful, and of these alone. Their opinion seems good—first, because it is plain that Christ speaks only of those who had received lamps, which only the faithful have : for the lamp is faith (*Ps. cxviii. 105*) ; secondly, because Christ teaches that faith without good works does not satisfy for salvation.

Another part of the question is the meaning of the five wise and the five foolish. S. Hilary says that the five wise include all the faithful, and the five foolish all the contrary. The Author makes the wise all spiritual men, and the unwise all carnal ; or, by the former, all who are, as S. Paul says (1 *Cor. vii. 34*), virgins both in body and spirit ; by the latter, those that are virgins in body but corrupt in soul. S. Chrysostom, Theophylact, Euthymius, and, perhaps, S. Ambrose (*Serm. xiv. on Ps. cxviii.*), by the wise, all who, besides the true virginity of mind and person, have also mercy and charity, and show them in giving of alms largely ; by the foolish, all who, though virgins, are not merciful, that is, have no oil in their vessels, and, therefore, do not works of almsgiving. S. Augustin (*Ep. cxx.*), S. Gregory (*Hom. xii. on Gospels*), and Bede (*in loc.*) make the five wise all virgins who have, as is said, a good intention and seek praise for their virtue, not from men, but from God ; the others are such as seek after human praise and flattery. Origen, S. Jerome, and S. John Damascus, or whoever is the author of his history, say that the wise virgins are all men who have good works with faith, and that the foolish are such as have faith indeed, but not works.

This seems not merely the best, but the only good explanation, because the great subject of the parable is that

faith without works is of no avail for salvation. Again, because the same is taught both by previous parables (xxiv. 45) and subsequent ones (verse 14), that it is not enough to believe unless we also watch to good works, because we know not at what hour the Lord will come. The same is again inculcated in another parable (xxii. 12), in which, as here are the virgins, so there is the guest who entered in at the wedding feast by faith, but who, because he had no wedding-garment, that is, works, was cast out.

3. The third point of the parable is the lamps which all the virgins received, and by which S. Hilary understands our human bodies, in which the divine light of the soul shines. S. Chrysostom, Theophylact, Euthymius, Bede, S. Augustin, and S. Gregory, in the works cited above, think that bodily virginity is intended. S. Jerome, of the bodily senses, and—with S. Hilary, Origen, and The Author—he explains it of faith. This agrees well with the sense of the parable ; for all take that to be faith from which they went out to meet Christ, but all did not go in with Him to the marriage, because all had not good works.

4. The fourth point is the oil which the wise virgins had and the foolish ones had not, and which S. Chrysostom, Euthymius, Theophylact, and S. Ambrose explain to be alms and mercy, as these are compared in Scripture to oil. But S. Augustin, S. Gregory, and Bede think it the good will which, as said before, seeks praise, not of men, but of God. The opinion of Origen, S. Hilary, The Author, and S. John Damascus is the only true and probable one. They understand by the oil good works, without which faith does not shine, that is, is dead (*S. James* ii. 26), and by which, if present, faith is kindled, shines, is made to appear, to show (*S. James* ii. 17). The foolish virgins say (verse 8), ‘Give us of your oil, for our lamps are gone out’. Not that without works faith is at once extinguished, but that when it does not shine through works, it appears to be so,

and avails no more to salvation than if it were wholly extinct ; or, as The Author says, because it is so ordered by nature that whereas faith is cherished and kept alive by good works, so without them it languishes, and by degrees becomes dead. To take oil then in the lamps is to lay up a plenty and, as it were, a treasure of good works against the future coming of Christ, as in chap. vi. 20.

5. The fifth part is the vessels which, S. Hilary says, are our human bodies, as S. Paul wrote (2 *Cor.* iv. 7). It would be better understood as the soul or conscience, which is the seat and receptacle of good works.

6. The sixth part is the bridegroom being said to have tarried. It cannot be doubted that by this Christ meant to teach us that the time of His second coming would be long, that He might disabuse the disciples of the false idea that He would come immediately after His Resurrection, as S. Chrysostom has observed. To the same purpose, S. Jerome and S. Hilary say that the delay of the bridegroom is a time of penance. But Christ speaks accommodately to the virgins, to whom, because He did not come immediately, as they expected, He appeared to delay too long ; for, to those who are waiting, all time naturally seems long. Otherwise Christ did not desire to signify of His own intention that His absence should be greatly prolonged ; for, as S. John says (1 *Ep.* ii. 18), "It is the last hour" ; and it was not in harmony with the parable to teach that His absence would be long, lest men whom He desired to teach to be diligent, watching, and always ready, should become negligent, slothful, and secure.

7. The seventh part is all the virgins being said to have slumbered and slept, which S. Hilary and S. Chrysostom (*in loc.*), S. Augustin (*Ep.* cxx., chap. xxxii.), S. Basil (*In Moral.*, chap. v.), explain by saying that all the virgins were dead before Christ came. The Author says that they were negligent. This would seem very good were it not

said that both the wise and the foolish slept. It should therefore, perhaps, be understood that they had ceased to think of the bridegroom coming, and did not expect him when he came. This would happen both to the good and the bad. For they who wait long for a person often cease to expect him, and when they are not looking for or thinking of him, that is, when they are sleeping, he suddenly comes. This is shown further by the time at which the bridegroom came: midnight.

8. The time at which the bridegroom came—that is, midnight—is the eighth part of the parable. They who think from this, as some do, that the usual hour of the bridegroom's coming to the house of the bride was midnight, seem not only to miss the point of the parable, but to pervert it, and to seek to reconcile things contradictory. For if midnight, and not earlier, were the time of the coming of the bridegroom, how did he delay when that period had not yet arrived? how did he seem to the virgins to tarry overlong, when they knew that he would not come before it? Some ancient Fathers believed that Christ would come at midnight, and so the Church Hymn seems to imply. S. Jerome says that it was an apostolic tradition that, at the Passover, it was not lawful to dismiss the people before midnight, because it was thought that He would come at that hour, as in Egypt of old. The Jews also expected their Messiah at midnight. But we must keep to the words, "You know not the day nor the hour". The meaning, therefore, is that He will come when He is least expected. For who could believe that He would come in the middle of the night, when men are buried in repose? So say, with justice, S. Gregory, S. Hilary, S. Jerome, S. Augustin, Theophylact, and Bede.

9. The ninth point is the cry "Behold". This doubtless is the great voice mentioned in chap. xxiv. 31, and the trumpet; as Origin, S. Chrysostom, The Author, Euthy-

mius, Theophylact, S. Jerome, S. Augustin (*Ep.* cxx., chap. iii.), have explained.

10. The tenth point is contained in verse 7: "Then all those virgins arose and trimmed their lamps," which is explained by S. Hilary of the resurrection of the body, and the restoration of all things. S. Augustin (in the above Epistle), The Author, and Bede (*in loc.*) explain it better, that a rumour will be heard of the coming of Christ; all men who, as if oppressed with sleep, had not thought of Him would arise, as S. Paul says (*Rom.* xiii. 11). To trim the lamps is to call to mind the works which everyone has done, to give account of them in the judgment.

11. The eleventh point is the saying of the foolish virgins to the wise: "Give us of your oil, for our lamps are gone out". It is clear that the meaning is that men who have no good works of their own, when it is too late, and they are called to judgment, will implore the help of the saints, as The Author explains it; as if they wished to cover themselves under the good works of others.

12. The twelfth point is the answer of the wise virgins: "Lest, perhaps, there be not enough for us and for you, go ye rather to them that sell and buy for yourselves". In this two things seem remarkable: (a) That the wise virgins refuse their help to the foolish, not because they would not give it if they could, but because at so late an hour they were not able. So say S. Chrysostom, Euthymius, and Theophylact. Or, as is more probable (as The Author says), because in that dreadful judgment no one will have sufficient confidence in himself, or appear to have enough of good works; for the words, "lest, perhaps, there be not enough for us and for you," evidently point to this. In these words, neither the treasure of the Church, which consists of the merits of the saints, nor their suffrages for others, are destroyed, as if the good works of one could not profit another. By the same reasoning, it would be proved

that the saints, even while alive, could not help other living persons by their prayers, which is contrary to all Scripture, from which we learn that by the merits of the saints the dead are aided. We find this in *S. Luke* xvi. 9: "Make unto you friends of the mammon of iniquity, that when you shall fail they may receive you into everlasting dwellings," where Christ says that the faith and labour of some can profit others. Many Ancients have rightly concluded the same from chap. ix. 2: "And Jesus, seeing their faith, said to the man sick with the palsy, Be of good heart, son, thy sins be forgiven thee," as has there been explained. What, then, is the meaning of the passage? This, that everyone in that last great final judgment will be judged by his own works, and not by those of others, as *S. Paul* said (*2 Cor.* v. 10), and should bear his own burden (*Gal.* vi. 5). *S. Augustin*, in his oft-cited *Ep.* cxxix., *S. Hilary*, and *S. Chrysostom* are to be understood in this sense when they say that this passage shows that no one is aided by the works of another.

(*b*) The second point is the foolish virgins being sent to those who sold, to buy oil for themselves. *Origen* and *The Author* explain this to mean the teachers of the Church, who sell the Word of God, not for a price, but for salvation and by the confession of faith, as is said by *S. Paul* (*2 Cor.* xii. 14), and as he calls those whom he brought to the Gospel his joy and crown (*Phil.* iv. 1). *S. Augustin*, *S. Gregory*, and *Bede*, by the sellers understand flatterers, who sell the fumes of false praise; as if it were said in irony, "Go to those flatterers in whose praises you take delight, and see what good they can do you". *S. Jerome* thinks that the foolish virgins—that is, those who have no good works—are sent into the world to gain with much labour the oil of good works. This would appear to be no part of the parable, but an offshoot of what either might have been or was very probable, and added to complete the

narrative, as were the words of the wise virgins, "lest, perhaps, there be not enough for us and for you". Both may have been added, not to carry any meaning, but as it was very probable that the virgins would have spoken in this manner. The words cannot mean that those who had no good works should be sent into the world to buy, that is, procure them. It was said because it was very probable that the foolish virgins would go to buy oil when they could obtain none from the others, and Christ must form a truth-like narrative. Or, if this part have any meaning at all, it may only be that the foolish and improvident would desire to do good works, and to be diligent in them, when the time is past and it is too late.

13. The thirteenth point is the coming of the bridegroom, which means, as no one doubts, the coming of Christ to judgment.

14. The fourteenth is the entering in of those who were prepared with the bridegroom into the marriage and the supper, by which the beatific life is described, as *Rev.* xix. 7.

15. The fifteenth is the door being shut when the foolish virgins returned ; which only means that they wished to do good works when it was too late, and when it was no longer a time to work, as Christ said (*S. John* ix. 4), "The night cometh when no man can work". Nor needs there further discussion of how, when the final judgment was ended, the foolish virgins returned to heaven, and beat the door, and entreated Christ with prayers to open to them. All this, as has been said, was added, not for a meaning, but to amplify and adorn the parable ; nor that it would happen in heaven, but that it was very likely to happen among men ; and, as S. Gregory said (*Hom.* xii.) on these words, this only was intended, that he cannot possibly merit to obtain from God what he asks there, who would not listen to what He commands here.



Verse 12. *I know you not.*

All authorities, ancient and modern, agree that the word "know" here and in other places does not mean recognition, but feeling, and, as they say, *scientia approbationis*; as if Christ said, "I do not approve you; I do not acknowledge you as My children"; or, as the Author says, "I do not see in you the marks of My spirit," of which S. Paul speaks (2 *Cor.* i. 22; and *Eph.* i. 3; iv. 30).

Verse 14. *For even as a man going into a far country.*

This is imperfect, and a *pendens oratio*. For there is nothing to which the words "even as" can refer to complete the sentence, as Origen has observed (*Tract.* xxxiii. in *S. Matt.*). We must therefore understand some such words as "Such is the kingdom of God," as Christ said, "The kingdom of God is like ten virgins". A similar form of speech is found in *S. Mark* xiii. 34.

It is doubtful whether the parable is the same as that of S. Luke (xix. 11); for there are many points of difference between the two. S. Luke mentions his as given at another time and place, when Christ had dined at the house of Zaccheus on His way to Jerusalem, before He entered the city on the ass: S. Matthew, when He was sitting on the Mount of Olives on the third day after His entry, as shown on chap. xxiv. 3. S. Luke says that the master gave to each of ten servants a pound: S. Matthew, that he distributed his goods to three servants, giving to one five talents, to another two, to a third one. S. Luke says that the first servant gained ten pounds, the second five; S. Matthew says that the first gained five, the second gained two. S. Luke, that the slothful servant bound his pound in a napkin: S. Matthew, that he hid it in the earth.

These differences induced S. Chrysostom to consider them different parables. S. Jerome, however, and S. Ambrose, in his *Commentary on S. Luc.*, xix., think them the same.

This opinion appears more probable, both as being that of all the more modern authors, from whom we should not differ without great reason ; and because it seems scarcely probable that Christ would have spoken the same parable twice in so short a time in different words. S. Luke's indication, that it was spoken at a different time and place to S. Matthew, is no novelty, as the Evangelists appear to differ in the details of time and place: whilst they take account of the thing done, not of the order and time of the events described by them.

Christ probably spoke this parable before He entered Jerusalem, because S. Luke said so, and S. Matthew, though silent, does not contradict him. In the other points on which they appear to differ, they give not the exact words of Christ ; but the sense of the whole parable is the same both in S. Luke and S. Matthew, though their accounts vary. S. Matthew probably retained the words of Christ rather than S. Luke ; both because he was present, and because he appears to relate the whole parable more distinctly. S. Luke, perhaps because Christ in the preceding parable had compared the kingdom of heaven to the ten virgins, introduced the same number here. But this does not affect the meaning. It is to be wished that S. Augustin, in his *De Consensu*, had given his opinion, but he does not raise the question.

We have now to see to what the parable tends. Euthymius says that its meaning is the same as that of the former parable of the faithful servant whom his lord, when going on a far journey, set over his household (xxiv. 45) ; and as that of the preceding one of the ten virgins, that the grace and faith given by God are to be cultivated and increased by diligence and good works, as S. Paul says of himself (1 *Cor.* xv. 10). Then also each will be judged according to his own works. Lastly, through our acceptance of the grace of God given to us, we merit addition of the same grace.

The parts of the parable seem to be twelve.

1. The departure of the man into the far country, whom no one can doubt to be Christ. S. Luke says, more plainly: "A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive a kingdom" (xix. 12). He calls him a nobleman, but not a king, because he had not yet received possession of the kingdom. When he had, he called him a king. So S. Matthew styles him first a man (verse 14), and then a king (verse 34).

2. The second is the departure of the nobleman, that is, Christ, into the far country. S. Chrysostom and Theophylact explain this of the Incarnation, because He departed for a far country when He came down from heaven to earth, and He again departed for a far country when He returned from earth to heaven. Not that heaven is far from the earth, but that the heavenly status of Christ, by which, before the Incarnation, He was in the form of God, and by which, after the Ascension, He sits at the right hand of the Father, was very far distant from that habit (*habitus*) in which He dwelt among us (*Phil.* ii. 7): "But emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men, and in habit found as a man"; or rather (*Ps.* xxi. 7): "But I am a worm and no man, the reproach of men and the outcast of the people". Some think the journey to have been His ascent into heaven, which is far distant from earth (Origen, S. Augustin, S. Jerome, Bede). Others that He would not return for a long time, as if He had taken a journey of many years duration. This is the opinion of S. Chrysostom, and seems the best of any. For the distance of place has nothing to do with the question; the length of time has much. For the lord wished to try the faith and diligence of his servants by a long absence, as in chaps xxi. 33; xxiv. 48; and *supra*, verse 5.

3. The third part is the servants, whom the greater number

of authorities regard as the Doctors of the Church, because Christ has seemingly given to them different talents ; that is, to some greater grace, and to some less, to preach the Gospel and explain the Holy Scriptures. So Origen (*Tract. xxxiii. on S. Matt.*), S. Chrysostom, S. Jerome, Bede, Euthymius, Theophylact (*Comment.*), S. Ambrose (*On S. Luke xix.*), S. Justin (*In Trypho*). Others, by the servants, understand all men, at least all Christians ; for to all God has given some talent, that is, some grace by which to trade, that by the addition of their own diligence they might merit increase of grace and eternal life. So say Anastasius (*Quest. 84*) and Theophylact of Antioch (*Alleg.*, lib. i.). This seems better than the former, because, as S. Luke says, Christ proposed this parable not only to the Apostles, who are Doctors of the Gospel, but to all His hearers ; and also because, as has been said more than once, the meaning of Scripture is not to be narrowed without very good reasons.

4. The fourth part is that he who is called a man gave his servants goods ; that is, as afterwards explained, talents (verse 15 and following). S. Ambrose (*Comment. on S. Luke xix.*) says that these talents are our natural reason, which whoever cultivates is thereby rendered worthy to receive the addition of grace, that more talents may be committed to him.

Maldonatus then gives the opinion of different Fathers and others as to what the talents are intended to signify. S. Ambrose thinks that they are our natural reason, which must be improved by grace. S. Jerome and others, that they show different offices in the Church—bishops, priests, deacons. S. Justin Martyr, Origen, and others, that they are the Gospel, which has to be taught and explained by the Doctors of the Church. Others, that they signify the different kinds of grace that are given to us gratis.

Having expressed his disagreement with these opinions, as restricting the meaning of Christ too much, he gives his own: that they are generally all the gifts of God to us, among which the grace (*gratum faciens*), as the Schoolmen say, is the first and foremost. This being given to us by God, to multiply it and increase it, and not to bury it in the earth; that is, suffer it to become unproductive, as Paul says of himself (1 *Cor.* xv. 10), and as he warns the Corinthians that they receive not the grace of God in vain (2 *Cor.* vi.).

5. The fifth part of the parable may be the number of talents, because to one was given five, to another two, and to another only one.

Maldonatus gives many mystical explanations of the number of the talents from different Fathers and others; but he concludes that the numbers have no real bearing on the meaning of the parable, because S. Luke (xix. 13) does not speak of five, two, and one, but says that each servant received one mina. S. Luke would not have written this if the numbers had any real significance, for he would then have altered the meaning of Christ. But because the chief meaning of the parable is to teach that some work more diligently with the grace of God, and some less, S. Luke only meant this when he said that one of these servants gained ten and another five. If the number had had any mystical meaning with S. Matthew, it had only this: to show generally that neither are all gifts given equally to all men, nor do all men co-operate equally with those they have. But his mentioning five rather than six, and two rather than three, seems to have no mystery in it. But the words of Christ, "to everyone according to his proper ability," are not so easily understood. S. Hilary, The Author, and Theophylact take Him to mean the peculiar virtue of each, which, as each receives from God in a greater or less degree, he receives a greater or less grace:

a dangerous idea if they understand us to have faith of ourselves, as each one's virtue may be said to be his own. For, as S. Paul says, "It is the gift of God" (*Eph.* ii. 8). Origen held this error, as appears from his Commentaries on this passage and S. Augustin once did the same, as he often blames himself for having done in his writings against the Pelagians.

S. Hilary, S. Jerome, and Bede thought that the words, "God gives His grace to each according to his proper ability," mean that He does so as each disposes himself to receive it; for this is a truth of the Church, though the heretics oppose it, and it is wholly true, though we may hardly venture to assert that Christ intended to assert it here. It is either the true explanation, or it is very like the truth. I should not think it senseless to say that nature was the peculiar virtue of each, which, although we have it of God and not of ourselves, yet can be said more truly than anything else to be our own. It is very probable, too, that in giving us His gifts God regards the nature of each, according to which He appears to act; as when He gave to Moses a greater faculty and grace for ruling, because he was very prudent by nature, and, as Scripture says, the meekest of all men. Or He may work exceptionally, as in the case of Balaam's ass.

It may be, however, that the words have no meaning as to the parable, but are introduced to explain it, and that Christ used them *ex consuetudine hominum*, as we have seen before: *e.g.*, verses 10, 11, 12. Because men then entrust their servants with their property, not at random, and equally one with another, but according to each one's worth and faithfulness, Christ said that this man, when going a long journey, gave to one five, to another two, and to a third one, "to everyone according to his proper ability": not that God gives His grace according to the peculiar virtue of each; for on this the parable is not to be

adapted to the thing signified: but that men, of whom Christ speaks, do so, and He, in His parables, as we have often said, speaks what is truth-like and customary among men; though what He says has no immediate bearing on the point of the parable.

6. The sixth part is the words of the servant (verse 20): "Lord, thou didst give to me five talents; behold I have gained other five over and above". The same language is used by him who received two talents and gained other two. But the meaning of gaining others over and above has been questioned.

Some of the authorities mentioned above take the increasing of the talents to mean the bringing of more men to Christ, as S. Paul says (1 *Cor.* ix. 19, 20). Others, as S. Jerome in his Commentary, say that it is the gaining of more knowledge of the Holy Scriptures and divine subjects. Others, that it is the addition of works to faith (S. Hilary, *Can.* xxvii.).

All these views narrow the meaning of Christ too much; and thus the opinion of The Author seems better, that the good use of grace received, merits additions of the same. This the Catholic Church teaches, and it agrees well with this text, where Christ tells us that they who use their talents with diligence are worthy of receiving more, as in verses 28, 29. Unless we say that to gain more talents is through grace received to perform other good works, from which results, as has been said, that by how much we do more good works, by so much we deserve greater accession of grace; as the one talent of the unprofitable servant was given to him who had gained the five.

7. The seventh part is from verse 18: "digged in the earth". We must see what it is to bury a talent in the earth. There appear to be two things intended here. Too great neglect in business, to which are opposed the words of the lord to the servant (verse 27). We give the bankers

the money with which we wish to traffic, and lay by what we have superfluous. To hide the talent in the earth, then, means to have received the grace of God in vain, as S. Paul says (2 *Cor.* vi. 1). The excessive fear of losing the talent is also shown. Each of these faults happens to those who, through too great fear of breaking either their vows or evangelical counsels, are content with the mere observance of precepts, lest, while they wish to add that of counsels, they do not even observe the precepts. That is, while they give a talent for traffic, they not only make no profit from it, but they lose their capital: like the negligent servant, who complained of his master being hard, reaping where he had not sown, and gathering where he had not strewed. By hiding his talent in the earth, he not only gained no profit, but he lost the talent which he desired by so doing to keep in safety.

The words of S. Matthew (that the slothful servant buried his talent) and of S. Luke (that he laid it up in a napkin) come to the same thing. The meaning is that while we seek to keep our grace too timidly, it may be rendered useless, and at last lost entirely. Some doubt why Christ said that the servant who received the one talent hid it in the earth rather than the others who had received more. There is no mystery in this, as S. Luke says that each servant received a pound; or, if there is, it is probable that he exaggerated the fault and negligence of that servant who, when he had received less, could have kept it, or traded with it, with less trouble. As he did not do this, he deservedly had his talent taken from him. But it is not to be concluded from the parable, that they who have received fewer graces from God are always less careful to cultivate them. For this is not the case; but they are rather to be blamed, who, when they have received a less responsibility, bear it with less diligence and courage, and they who, when they have received less grace, give a less good account of



it ; because it is more easy to give account of a small trust than of a great one.

8. The eighth is in verse 19 : “ But after a long time the lord of those servants came ” ; from which it is not doubtful that the second coming of Christ is meant, which was to take place a long time after.

9. The ninth part is in the words that immediately follow : “ And reckoned with them ” ; the meaning of which is that Christ will require in the judgment an account from everyone who calls himself His servant, of the grace given to him.

10. The tenth is in verse 21 : “ His lord said unto him, Well done, good and faithful servant ; because thou hast been faithful over a few things I will place thee over many things : enter thou into the joy of thy lord ” ; in which the same thing is said as is said to the other servant who had increased the two talents (verse 23). By this Christ teaches us that He will give His good servants rewards greater than their merits (*Rom.* viii. 18 ; *Isa.* lxiv. 4 ; *1 Cor.* ii. 9), as S. Jerome says. Are we then to receive a reward which we have not merited ? By no means ; for every reward which we shall receive we shall have merited, or it would be no reward ; but because we must look not to the equality of justice, but to the analogy of the giver and receiver, the reward is said to be greater than the merit. There is a well-known anecdote of Alexander the Great. He commanded a large sum of money to be given to a certain poet. The poet answered, “ This is too much for a poet ”. “ But,” replied Alexander, “ it is not too much for Alexander.”

“ Enter thou into the joy of thy lord,” is not a part of the parable, but an explanation of the former words, “ I will place thee over many things ” ; that is, “ I will make thee a sharer of the same kingdom, the same glory, and, what follows, of the same joy,” as is said of Christ Himself

(*Phil.* ii. 7, 8, 9), and as S. Paul says of the Corinthians (2 *Cor.* i. 7, and 2 *Tim.* ii. 12; S. *Luke* xix. 17), because one pound had gained ten, and again of the other servant whose one pound had gained five (verse 19). This is to be taken generally, not specifically, and not as if the meaning were that in heaven men will be put over cities, or in such positions: but that according to their merits they will receive rewards, some greater and other less; either Christ or the Evangelist expressed, *ex consuetudine*, the meaning of the former, not the words, when He said, "Be thou over ten cities," because He spoke of a kingdom; and it is the custom of kings to place deserving persons to govern cities.

11. The eleventh part is in verse 24: "But he that had received the one talent came and said: Lord, I know that thou art a hard man; thou reapest where thou hast not sown, and gatheredst where thou hast not strewed".

Some have thought this an essential and peculiar part of the parable, and (verse 26) Christ seems to make it so. Some have thought the words "reaping where thou hast not strewed" to mean that God requires righteousness from those Gentiles in whose minds He had not sown the seed of a Law. S. Hilary is the author of this view; but S. Jerome understands that God requires good works, not only from those to whom He has given either the Mosaic or the Evangelical Law, but also from the philosophers who lived without law.

It does not appear to be any part of the parable, but an addition or supplement added for explanation. Nor is it likely that anyone finally condemned by Christ would so reply to Him; but it is probable that the slothful servant would so answer his master when requiring an account of his truth, and when he was rebutting the charge of negligence from himself, and excusing his own slothfulness by the severity of his master. Verse 26 therefore is

not to be understood as if what the slothful servant said the good master acknowledged to be the truth, but because the servant said it not as from the truth, but as from his own opinion ; for the master wished to confute him from his own words, as *S. Luke* (xix. 22) has expressed.

12. The twelfth part is verse 27 : "Thou oughtest, therefore, to have committed my money to the bankers, and at my coming I should have received my own with usury".

Maldonatus gives us different explanations of the verse. Some think that the slothful servant was a priest or teacher who had not duly executed his office. Others, that the people are termed bankers, who desire to hear the Word of God, which increases to them as money at usury. But he rejects them all, as though, perhaps, partly true, yet not sufficiently full and perfect. He himself thinks that the words are no essential part of the parable, and that their meaning is, as before, that we should simply seek to increase the grace given to us, by every means in our power, Christ having given us an example from things in most ordinary use, and which are known to all. God does not require us to increase our grace by wicked means, nor does He approve of usury. He only requires diligence. As when He praised the wicked steward who said to the debtor who owed a hundred barrels of oil : "Take thy bill and sit down quickly and write fifty" (*S. Luke* xvi. 6); and when He commands us to make friends of the Mammon of iniquity, He does not approve of the fraud of the man, but his diligence and prudence, which He would have us practise also. Some distinguish between wickedness and sloth—the former meaning unbelief, the latter negligence.

13. The thirteenth is from the rest of verse 27 : "That at my coming I should receive my own with usury". Usury there meaning every good thing, either to the receiver of grace, or to those to whom he ministers it.

14. The fourteenth is verse 28 : " Take ye away, therefore, the talent from him ". The meaning generally is that the gifts of God are often taken away from those who do not use them well. This is true for the most part ; and always in the sense *gratum faciens*, in the other graces often.

15. The fifteenth is from the words : " And give it to him that hath ten talents ". This does not seem to be properly a part of the parable ; for the grace that is taken from one is not given to another ; but it would be said, either because it happens among men that money taken from a slothful or untrustworthy servant is given to a faithful and diligent one, or because it was very likely that the master would do so, though God does not. It does not mean, therefore, what God does, but what the negligent and diligent servants merit. It will be asked how, after the judgment, account is to be rendered, and grace taken from one and given to another ; not indeed the same grace (as has been shown before), but different in different cases. The answer is, that this either does not apply to the object of the parable : or if it do, it is to be understood, not of the Last Judgment, but of every day, and particular ones ; although the parable properly points to the Last Judgment. For God daily judges men, and takes His grace from the unworthy and gives it to the deserving.

The parable has so far been explained ; the conclusion follows with a general application.

Verse 29. *For to everyone that hath shall be given, and he shall abound.*

Origen explains these words thus : To him who has *ex se* faith and good-will towards God, grace shall be given which he has not *ex se*. A caution against this error has been given above. The Author, S. Jerome, and Bede speak

to the same effect, except that they do not speak of anyone having faith *ex se*. S. Jerome says : To him who has faith and good-will towards God, even if in some degree deficient in good works, it will be given by the good Judge to have the want supplied. But he who has not faith will lose the other virtues which he appears to have. S. Hilary says : To everyone who has the Gospel, the Law also will be added ; but from he who receives not the Gospel, the Law also will be taken away. Either must be understood according to the subject-matter of the parable. This was the question of two servants, one of whom rendered more than he had received, the other the same amount. "Behold," he said, "here thou hast that which is thine : " the meaning being, not that generally to everyone who has it is given, and from everyone who has not it is taken away ; but to everyone who has more grace than he received, because he increased it by his diligence, still more is given ; and from everyone who has not increased the grace he received, but keeps it unprofitable and useless, even that which he has, because he has shown himself unworthy of it, is taken away.

It has been asked why it was not said, "That which he hath," but "That which he seems to have"? The reason may be that the servant who hid the money in the earth had it as if he had it not, because it was idle and useless. This is meant to show that they treat the grace of God in like manner, so that they attempt no good from it ; do not so much possess the grace, as seem to possess it. It may be said, if he has grace truly who has it thus, how did Christ say just after, "from him that hath not"? These words are not to be referred to the grace received, but to the increase of grace which, when he ought to have it, he has it not ; for the servant had the talent, but had not the profit from it ; and it was of this that Christ said, "from him that hath not" ; but it was of the talent which the

servant possessed indeed, but uselessly, and not otherwise than as if he had not possessed it at all, that Christ said afterwards, "what he seemed to have shall be taken away".

Verse 30. *Into the exterior darkness.*

This has been explained on chap. viii. 12.

Verse 31. *When the Son of man shall come in His majesty.*

Such seems to be the explanation of the foregoing parable. Christ says that in the judgment He will take account of His servants (verse 19). Why Christ is called the Son of man has been explained (viii. 20).

*In His majesty.*

That is, to show His majesty, which, when He spoke these words, He had not shown. Christ here contrasts the present with the future, and His second coming with His first. What SS. Chrysostom and Jerome say is very probable, that Christ spoke of His future majesty and glory because He was to come long after His death, so as that these might compensate for His present weakness, and that He might elevate the minds of His disciples, lest they should fail in faith, which, as has before been observed, they had done.

*And all the angels with Him.*

Christ says this both to show that all the angels were His, and to place the majesty of His future coming before the eyes of the disciples. For as all the ministers precede the king when he is going on a procession of state, so all the angels will accompany Christ when He comes to judgment. They will all come, as S. Chrysostom thinks, as witnessing the actions of those who are to be called to judgment; as S. Paul says (*Heb.* i. 14).

*Then shall He sit.*

This does not mean that He will not so sit before: for He is sitting even now at the right hand of the Father, which is the seat of majesty; but it is an antithesis between the time of the second advent and the first, when these words were spoken. For He had not then sat on the seat of His majesty. He spoke not of truth, but of the future demonstration of His majesty; but He is truly sitting now. Men do not see Him sitting; but they shall see Him then, and thus it is that He says, "Then shall He sit".

*Upon the seat of His majesty.*

*Δόξης αὐτοῦ* "of His glory": a Hebraism for His glorious seat. Origen (*Tract xxxiv. on S. Matt.*) takes the seat to be either the perfection and virtues of the saints, because Christ will come accompanied by them, an opinion which is approved by The Author; or the angels, who are, therefore, called Thrones (*Col. i. 16; Ps. xcvi. 1; lxxix. 2; xvii. 11*). Bede thinks it the Church as being Christ's tribunal. These views have an air of probability, but they are rather allegorical than literal.

The meaning may be that Christ will sit upon some bright cloud, because (1st) He was so taken up into heaven (*Acts i. 9*), and it was said that He would so come again; though this may possibly refer not so much to the manner of His return as to its truth; (2ndly) because it is everywhere said that He would come on the clouds of heaven (*xxiv. 30; xxvi. 64*); and (3rdly) because the Divine Majesty seems always to have been shown through a cloud; as *chap. xvii. 5; Exod. xvi. 10*.

Verse 32. *And all nations shall be gathered together before Him.*

Origen raised the question whether all nations will be gathered together, or only those who were then among the

living, or only Christians ; and, if these, whether all or only those then living ? He and Euthymius think that it will be only Christians, because the rest have already been judged ; as S. John (iii. 18), " He that doth not believe is already judged," says. Bede thinks that there are four classes of men. 1. Some who will not be judged, but will judge, as the Apostles, to whom it was said (xix. 28) : " I say to you that you, who have followed Me, in the regeneration, when the Son of man shall sit on the seat of His majesty, you also shall sit on twelve seats, judging the twelve tribes of Israel " ; and S. Paul says (1 *Cor.* vi. 3), " Know ye not that the saints shall judge the world ? "

2. Others who will be judged, but will not judge, yet they will be saved ; as those to whom it was said, " Come, ye blessed of My Father, possess you the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world ".

3. Those who will neither judge, nor be judged, but will perish ; of whom it was said (*Ps.* i. 5), " Therefore the wicked shall not rise again in judgment, nor sinners in the council of the just ".

4. Those who will not judge but will be judged, and being condemned in the judgment, will perish, of whom will be said (verses 41, 42) : " Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, which was prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was hungry, and you gave Me not to eat : I was thirsty, and you gave Me not to drink."

Scripture says everywhere that all men shall appear before the judgment-seat of Christ (*Rom.* xiv. 10 ; 2 *Cor.* v. 10). The words of S. John, " He that believeth not is condemned already " (iii. 18), signify merely that his case is so clear that there is no need for his being brought to judgment at all : for in not believing he condemns himself ; as in *Titus* iii. 11. It has been objected that such sayings as (xxv. 35) " For I was hungry, and you gave Me to eat ; I was thirsty, and you gave Me to drink ; I was a stranger,



and you took Me in," and the opposite (verses 42, 43) cannot apply to all men: for many will be condemned who never saw Christ hungry, and who never knew Him, and were ignorant that the poor represented Him; and again, that infants who must either be saved or not, and who will not be saved because they fed Christ when He was hungry, nor be condemned for not having done so, will not therefore be brought into judgment. There is one easy and obvious answer to this and all such questions. Christ here puts one class for the whole race, as we often do; and thus He will not say to all who will be saved, "I was hungry, and you gave Me to eat," nor to all who will be condemned the contrary, but only to some; for by this example He intended to teach simply that He will neither save nor condemn men rashly, nor without most just reasons, declared openly and publicly, and before all men. Infants, therefore, and all men, believers or not, will be judged, and the reason of the salvation or condemnation of each will be given. If it is asked why Christ said "all nations," rather than all men, the reason may be that "all nations" may have been used to give weight to the assertion, and to show not only numbers but varieties, as intending to increase the majesty of the Judge when it will be seen that He comes as the Judge of all the different nations.

Verse 33. *And He shall set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on His left.*

Beyond question, the sheep are the good, and the goats the wicked; but why they should be so seems doubtful. Origen, Euthymius, and Theophylact think the sheep are the good, as being gentle; and the goats the wicked because they are rough, and climb precipitous places, that is, do not walk in the straight paths. SS. Hilary and Chrysostom, Euthymius and Theophylact, think that the sheep are

the good, because they are profitable, and the goats are the contrary. It may be because Christ had before used the figure of sheep and goats, as He had in the preceding verse, "All nations shall be gathered together before Him, and He shall separate them one from another, as the shepherd separateth the sheep from the goats": understanding the good by the sheep, and the evil by the goats, because sheep are better than goats. For the same reason He says that He will place the sheep on the right hand, as the place of honour, and the goats on the left; as S. Hilary says, whose opinion seems preferable to that of Origen, S. Jerome, Bede, and The Author, who think that the good are placed on the right hand and the evil on the left, because, in Holy Scriptures, the good is signified by the right, and the evil by the left; as in *Eccles.* x. 2: "The heart of a wise man is in his right hand, and the heart of a fool in his left hand".

The question is often asked where those infants will be who die unbaptised, and who would be condemned, not for any works of their own, but from their sinful origin. They will assuredly be placed on the left hand, as the others, who will be placed on the right, will be saved, not for their own good works, but because of the grace of their baptism. But in the judgment, as appears *ex sententia*, the question will be only of good and evil works. This I firmly deny, for the merits of each will be weighed, and these do not always consist of acts done, but sometimes in intention alone, or in grace alone. But, as has been said, it was not the intention of Christ to explain all the reasons of the salvation of some and the condemnation of others, but to give an example only of one kind from which the rest may be concluded.

Verse 34. *Then shall the king say.*

Christ has not called Himself a king before, but a man, or the Son of man; and, in *S. Luke* xiv. 12, a nobleman,

who was going to a far country to obtain a kingdom. But He now calls Himself a king, because He is speaking of the time when He will have received the kingdom and come back again ; and, again, because He had not spoken of royal dignity before ; now that He has done so, He rightly styles Himself a king.

*To them that shall be at His right hand.*

Christ begins from the more honourable, as observing the custom of men : or, as The Author says, He begins with those who are on the right hand, that is, with the good, because He is more ready to save than to condemn.

*Come.*

Christ calls them to Him, because He wishes to make them partakers of His kingdom ; as in *S. John* xii. 26. Because then He had received possession of His Father's kingdom, He calls His servants to the same ; for He speaks as if immediately about to return to Him, and He desires His servants to follow Him.

*Ye blessed of My Father.*

Some explain this to mean those on whom the Father has heaped many blessings, because "to bless" most frequently means in Scripture to confer blessings on. But this does not seem satisfactory, because it does not seem possible to understand the words of past blessings, which may perhaps have been given in greater abundance to many of the condemned ; but they apparently refer to the future glory to which Christ invites them. It is the same, then, as if Christ had said, "Blessed of My Father," and as such to have the gift of eternal life ; as chap. xxi. 9. When the people said to Christ, "Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord," they did not speak of grace received, but they prayed for that which was to be given to them by

God. Nor does their opinion seem sound who refer the words to predestination, as if the reason of their salvation were tacitly implied, that they are blessed of the Father because they were predestinated by Him.

*Possess you the kingdom prepared for you.*

*Κληρονομεῖτε* ; that is, possess you your inheritance. The followers of Calvin speak as if these words destroyed all idea of merit. For they say, if it is heirship, it is not reward (*merces*), and is not given to labour or merit, but to birth (*origini*), as we are the sons of God, and if sons, then heirs (*Rom. viii. 17*). We are sons by faith, but with them heresy is faith, and thus everything falls *in nihilum*.

But these cannot deny that eternal life is called in Scripture reward ; so chaps. v. 12 ; vi. 1 ; x. 41, 42 ; xx. 8 ; 1 *Cor. iii. 8, 14* ; ix. 18 ; *Apoc. xi. 18* ; xxii. 12. They answer that it is called reward not because it is such, but because it is given like a reward after labour ; but given *post laborem, non propter laborem*, after labour, not because of labour.

If there were no other passage but this, it would be clear that eternal life is given not only *post opera*, but *propter opera*, and is therefore truly and properly a reward. In the same manner, in the same context, in the same words, in the same sense, it is said to the good, "Come, ye blessed of My Father, possess you the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry, and ye gave Me to eat," &c. And to the wicked, "Go, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, which was prepared for the devil and his angels: for I was hungry, and ye gave Me not to eat," &c. It is clear that not merely the consequence, as the above heretics say, but the true cause is shown. They are condemned because they truly and properly deserved it ; for when Christ was hungry they fed Him not. When, therefore, it is said to the good, "Come, ye blessed of the Father, possess the kingdom prepared for you : for I was

hungry, and ye gave Me to eat," not only the consequence, but the cause and merit are given, as may indeed be proved more clearly from some other passages. For that it is properly a reward the heretics themselves are forced to confess, and given not only *post* but *propter laborem*. That it is so given we know from the fact that to the greater labour is given the greater reward, and to the less labour the less reward. S. Paul testifies that in this way life eternal is given (1 Cor. iii. 8): "Everyone shall receive his own reward according to his own labour". What is this but to say that he who has laboured more shall receive a greater, and he who has laboured less shall receive a less, reward? Besides, when Christ said (x. 41), "He that receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive the reward of a prophet," who in his senses can doubt that He distinguished between a greater and a less reward in the reception of a prophet and a righteous man, as it is an act of greater merit to receive a prophet than a righteous man? These persons, then, should have no difficulty in understanding why eternal life is called both a reward and an heirship—reward, because given to desert: heirship, because given to sons. But they are deceived by thinking God to be like men, among whom heirships are often given rashly, and without judgment, to good sons and to bad sons. But God does not act thus. He gives the kingdom of heaven only to His sons, because His sons only have merited it; and not only as they are sons, but as they are worthy. He, therefore, does not give an equal part to all; but the better part to the more deserving, as a wise father does. S. Chrysostom, Theophylact, and Euthymius have observed that the word *κληρονομεῖν* has the force, not of the receipt of a thing in any manner whatever, but as an heirship, as a *proprium*, as a *debitum*, because they assert the freedom of the will and the merits of good works. Calvin often calls them philosophers.

*The kingdom prepared for you.*

That is, predestinated, as in chap. xx. 23, where the pronouns *vobis*, "to you," and *quidas*, "for whom," have the same force as *vobis*, "for you," here; so that the meaning is "for you merit it," as there, "for whom it is prepared," that is, for those who merit it; for the causal particle "for" in the next verse is to be referred, as is thought, here, "For I was hungry": the meaning being, "Possess ye the kingdom which the Father hath prepared for you, because I was hungry, and you gave Me to eat," as S. Chrysostom and S. Jerome explain. But the subject of Christ's words is rather the cause of the glorification of the saved than of their predestination, as the antithesis shows: "Depart from Me, you cursed, into everlasting fire, which was prepared for the devil and his angels". But Christ does not say here why fire was prepared for these from eternity, but why they were sent into it. In fact He says that the fire was prepared for the devil and his angels. In the same manner are to be understood the words following: "Come, possess ye the kingdom, for I was hungry".

Verse 35. *For I was hungry.*

It has been made a question whether Christ will speak these actual words when He comes to judgment. We may think that He will say not only these, but others not uttered by Him, or recorded by the Evangelists; for, as before said, not all who will receive the kingdom will receive it as having fed Christ when He was hungry. And we may believe that the reason will be given to each why he is admitted to the kingdom of heaven; for to do so would pertain both to the dignity of the judge and the glory of the blessed. Why, then, did He speak only of those who gave Him meat when He was hungry? It has been shown above that He gave one case as an example of the whole; and He gave this rather than any other, because nothing is

so praiseworthy in us than that charity to our neighbours which, though it takes many forms, appears in none to more advantage than in the feeding of the hungry poor, as Euthymius has observed.

Verse 37. *Then shall the just answer Him, Lord, when did we see Thee hungry?*

Origen and The Author think that the just said this, not from forgetfulness, but from humility, as if not admitting that they had that grace of charity for which Christ praised them. It may be rather that they answer thus because they did not understand the words of Christ, for they could not be ignorant that they had at times fed the poor of Christ, but because He will not say, "The poor were hungry, and you fed them," but "I was hungry, and you fed Me," and they will know that they had never fed Christ Himself, therefore they will ask, "When saw we Thee hungry?" It seems to be thus from Christ's explanation, verse 40.

Verse 40. *As long as.*

'Εφ' ὅσον, As far as you did it to one of these, My least brethren, you did it to Me: that is, what you did to them, you did to Me; as verse 45.

Verse 41. *You cursed.*

Origen and S. Chrysostom observe that Christ did not say, "Cursed of My Father," as He had said to the just, "Blessed of My Father" (verse 34), because God is the author, not of cursing, but of blessing: not of punishment, but of reward. Not that He is not also the author of punishment, but He has prepared rewards freely, and out of the inclination of His own mind. He prepared punishments unwillingly, as it were, and to satisfy His justice.

*Into everlasting fire.*

These words confute the opinion of the followers of Origen, who denied the eternity of the punishment of hell,

against whom Bede and Theophylact argue on this passage. Origen himself, in his *Tractat.* xxxiv., speaks very soundly on it.

It has been doubted whether it will be a true and literal fire. Two things are certain on the subject :

1. That the Faith teaches us that the punishment will be a true one, felt not in thought only, but in sense and contact.

2. There is another less certain, not taught by the Faith, but held by almost all ancient authorities, that the fire would not be of the same nature as ours. So say Origen (*Hom. ad Diversos.*, and *Tract.* xxxiv. on *S. Matt.*), S. Ambrose (*Comment. on S. Luke* xiv.), S. Jerome (*On Isa.* lxv., lxvi.), Damascene (*De Fid.*, iv., last chapter, *ad fin.*).

But it does not follow from this that it is not true fire ; and we cannot safely deny that it is, because Scripture everywhere calls the pains of hell, fire. If this were a metaphor and not the literal truth, they would sometimes be described otherwise, and not so frequently termed fire.

*Which was prepared for the devil and his angels.*

Christ does not say, "Which was prepared for you," as of the kingdom of heaven (verse 34, and 1 *Tim.* ii. 4 ; *Wisd.* i. 13 ; *Eccles.* vii. 30). God prepared the kingdom of heaven for all men, if they will be saved from all eternity : but eternal fire only by necessity and a kind of compulsion to punish the wickedness of the angels. So say Origen, S. Chrysostom, Theophylact, and Euthymius. For the same reason, perhaps, He did not say, "Which is prepared from the foundation of the world," as He had said of the kingdom of heaven (verse 34) : because He had prepared the kingdom of heaven, which He made of His own will, for men from the beginning of the world, that is, before He created men themselves. He prepared the fire only from compulsion, and, therefore, not from the foundation of the world, but after this, and after sin.



## CHAPTER XXVI.

THE JEWS CONSPIRE AGAINST CHRIST—HE IS ANOINTED BY MARY — THE TREASON OF JUDAS — THE LAST SUPPER—THE PRAYER IN THE GARDEN—THE APPREHENSION OF OUR LORD—HIS TREATMENT IN THE HOUSE OF CAIAPHAS.

Verse 1. *And it came to pass.*

S. CHRYSOSTOM and Theophylact think this a continuation of the preceding ; the Evangelist uniting the Passion of Christ to the kingdom described in the last chapter. But it would rather appear to be a transition, by which the office of a teacher having been explained, that of the Redeemer is set forth.

*All these words.*

S. Hilary and others understand the discourses of the last chapter on the future judgment ; others refer them not only to the last chapter, but to the 24th chapter as well, where Christ speaks of the end of the world ; others, again, think that the words refer to everything which S. Matthew has written from the beginning of the Gospel to this time, that the discourses may contain not words only, but deeds as well ; as if Christ said to His disciples, when He had said and done all that has been described : “ You know that after two days,” &c. This is the opinion of Bede, and Strabus after him. These opinions are probable ; but the explanation of S. Thomas in his Commentaries on the Passover seems better : that the Evangelist wished to com-

prehend the whole doctrine of Christ, which he had set forth in the whole Gospel ; as if he would say : “ When Christ had fulfilled the office of a teacher, He began to prepare Himself for that of a Redeemer, and to admonish His disciples of it”. For although with the Hebrews words mean things as well, it seems in this passage too stringent to understand by “ words” both words and deeds. Origen has observed that the Evangelist wrote the words “ all these,” not to exclude those discourses which Christ held both before His Passion and after His Resurrection.

Verse 2. *You know that after two days.*

This is a difficult passage, and it is complicated by many questions :

I. (On which all the rest depend)—On what day Christ said the above words. For from this we may see on what day the Passover fell.

II. On what day Christ celebrated the Passover.

III. On what day the Jews kept the Passover, as S. John signifies that they did not keep it on the same day as Christ.

IV. If they did not keep it on the same day, which of the two—Christ and His disciples, or the Jews—kept it on the lawful and appointed day.

I. On the FIRST QUESTION almost all ancient writers agree that Christ said this on the 12th day of the 1st month of the Hebrews (Nisan), which is our March, because the Passover was celebrated at the end of the 14th and begin- of the 15th day (*Exod. xii. 6-18*), and Christ speaks of the Passover as ordered by the Law, *ex legis prescripto*. Thus, even if the opinion of the Greeks, which is entirely erroneous (as shall be shown in the second question), that Christ anticipated the Passover by one day, were true, it would make no difference ; for He spoke of that Passover which the disciples knew would be, by the Law, after two days. But if Christ anticipated His own Passover two days, the

disciples, when He was about to celebrate it, did not know it. But he said, You know that after two days is the feast of the Passover. It is clear, from two circumstances, on what day of the week Christ said this. First, from the day of His Passion—for it is certain that Christ suffered *on the sixth day*; because S. Luke (xxiii. 56) and S. John (xix. 31) testify that the day after was the Sabbath; and all the use of the Catholic Church teaches the same. If so, it is certain that Christ spoke those words *on the third day*. For, on the same day as that on which He ate the lamb—that is, celebrated the Passover—He died. But He ate the lamb at the first hour of the night—that is, on the beginning of the 15th day. He died on *the sixth hour of the following day* (the *dies usualis*, as it is termed, but of the same natural day); and between the third and sixth days was an interval of two days; that is, after two days was the feast of the Passover.

Then, from the extraordinary entrance into Jerusalem, the same result follows. For that took place on the first day of the week, which we now call the Lord's day; as the Church teaches, and as we learn from S. John (xii. 1). He says that Christ came to Bethany, where Lazarus had died, six days before the Passover; and he says afterwards (in verse 12) that Christ made the great entry into Jerusalem. It is probable that He did not enter the city on the preceding day, but remained at Bethany, because it was the Sabbath, on which it was not lawful for the people to cut down branches from the trees. If, then, the Sabbath was the sixth day before the Passover, as S. John says, the Passover was on the sixth day of the week following. For the Sabbath was the sixth day from the following sixth day. When Christ said, then, "After two days," it follows that He said it on the third day, which the Latins called *dies Martis* (Tuesday).

The order, then, of the Acts of Christ from the Sabbath day on which He was at Bethany to the day of the Pass-

over, on which He died, as collected from the Evangelists, is as follows :

He supped at Bethany on the Sabbath (*S. John* xii. 2).

He entered Jerusalem on the first day of the week (*S. John* xii. 12).

He returned to Bethany, where He had His dwelling, the same day (*S. Matt.* xxi. 17).

He returned again to Jerusalem the second day (*S. Matt.* xxi. 18 ; *S. Mark* xi. 13), and then on the way cursed the fig-tree.

He returned to Bethany the same day (*S. Mark* xi. 19), and the disciples could not see the fig-tree, because it was perhaps drawing towards night.

He returned to Jerusalem on the third day, and then Peter saw the fig-tree withered away, because it was clear day (*S. Mark* xi. 20-27), and He returned to Bethany the same day ; as it was His custom (*S. Luke* xxi. 37) to pass the nights away from Jerusalem on the Mount of Olives, at the foot of which Bethany was situated.

The Evangelists do not say that He returned to Jerusalem until the fifth day at evening, when He celebrated the Passover.

Christ said these words, then, either on the third day in the evening, or on the fourth at the beginning of the night, which, with the Hebrews, is the beginning of the day. If the former, He spoke exclusively ; if the latter, inclusively.

II. On this SECOND QUESTION some say that Christ did not keep the Passover at all that year, as we learn from Euthymius and Theophylact (v. 20). But the other Greeks wholly differ from the Latins.

The opinion of the ancient Greeks seems to have been that Christ celebrated the Passover on the thirteenth day of the first month Nisan, which is our March ; that is, one day before the time ordered by the Law of Moses (*Exod.* xii. 6), that His death might fall upon the actual day of the Pass-

over, that is, on the fourteenth day of the first month; that the truth might answer to the figure, and the true Lamb be slaughtered on the same day as the typical one. For Christ died on the day after that on which He ate the lamb with the disciples. This is the opinion of Origen (*Tract. xxxv. on Matt.*), S. Chrysostom, Theophylact (*In S. John xviii. 28*), Euthymius (*in loc.*).

Hence arose the error of the more modern Greeks, that in that Last Supper Christ used not unleavened but leavened bread, because it was not yet the day of the former, that is, the fifteenth day of the first month, the day after that on which the lamb was slain (*Exod. xii. 18*). Their arguments are as follows :

(1) S. John says that Christ made that supper before the day of the Pasch (xiii. 1).

(2) That it is clear from S. John (xiii. 29) that, when Christ was condemned, the Jews had not celebrated the Passover.

(3) S. John (xix. 14, 31) says that Christ suffered in the parasceue of the Pasch; that is, the day before the Pasch. For the day of the Pasch was the first day of the Azymes (*Exod. xii. 18; Levit. xxiii. 6*), and as Christ made that supper the day before the first day of Azymes He could not use Azymes at it.

This will be refuted in the reply to the fourth question. It need only be said at present that to accuse Christ, who obeyed most perfectly every law as long as He was among men, and taught others to do the same, of having anticipated the day of Pasch is most senseless. It was unheard of that anyone celebrated the feast before the day appointed by the Law, as S. Thomas, in his *Commentary on S. John xviii.*, has observed.

The Latins agree that Christ ate the Passover on the fourteenth day of the first month at even, as the Law commanded; but this seems to have escaped the Greeks

and some of the Latins, because they have missed the sense of the Law. The Jews began their day from sunset, as the Greeks and Latins began it from midnight, and others from sunrise. The Law commanded (*Exod.* xii. 6; *Levit.* xxiii. 5) that the lamb should be eaten on the fifteenth day of the first month at even; as the Hebrew expresses it **בין הערבים** "between the two evenings," that is, on the confine of each day, the fourteenth and the fifteenth; for the setting of the sun formed the end of the fourteenth and the beginning of the fifteenth. The same evening was said to be the evening of each day: of the fourteenth, because it was the end of that day; of the fifteenth, because it was the beginning of that night. And this is the meaning of the expression "between the two evenings," not, as some say, that these are the beginning—the one of the preceding and the other of the following night—which was clearly contrary to the Law, which carefully provided that the lamb should be eaten at that precise point of time, and that nothing of it should be left till morning (*Exod.* xii. 10; *Levit.* xxii. 30); nor, as a follower of Calvin said, that one evening is to be understood of the end of the fourteenth day and the other as the whole night of the following day. Hence Christ is sometimes said to have celebrated the Pasch on the fourteenth day and sometimes on the fifteenth, as in verse 17, and *S. Mark* xiv. 12, and *S. Luke* xxii. 7, in all which places it is said that on the fifteenth day of the first month the Pasch, that is, the Paschal lamb, was to be slain; while *Exod.* xii. 6 and *Levit.* xxiii. 5 commanded it to be slain on the fourteenth day. Because it was slain on the confines of each day, it is said at one time to be slain on the fourteenth day, and at another on the fifteenth, when even to the eighth day it was not lawful to use leavened bread (*Exod.* xii. 15; *Levit.* xxiii. 6). Thus the error of the Greeks is most clearly refuted; for S. Matthew, S. Mark, and S. Luke write in plain words that the day on which Christ ate the

lamb was the first day of Azymes, so that He could not, contrarily to the Law, use leavened bread. How S. John calls that day the day of the Passover, and why the Jews did not, on the same night, eat the lamb, shall be explained, as has been said, in the fourth question.

But from what has been said it appears why S. John (xiii. 1) says that Christ took the supper before the day of the Passover; we also see that he speaks not of the Passover of the Jews but of Christ, of which we will speak hereafter. It is the same as if he said at the fourteenth day at evening He did that, when it was only lawful to use unleavened bread.

What, therefore, the other three Evangelists relate as having been done on the fifteenth day—that is, the first day of Azymes—S. John describes as having taken place before the day of the Pasch—that is, on the fourteenth day—with no contradiction, but in harmony with the usual custom of Scripture in which the lamb is said to have been slain, now on the fourteenth, now on the fifteenth, day, because it was slain, as it were, at the junction of the two days. It is clear, then, that Christ ate the lamb at the end of the fourteenth and the beginning of the fifteenth day, both from this comparison of S. Matthew, S. Mark, and S. Luke with S. John, and from the explanation of the former question. For if, as has been proved, Christ said these words, “after two days,” on the fourteenth day of the first month, and He spoke without doubt of His own Pasch, it follows that He celebrated the Pasch on the fifteenth day, at the end of the fourteenth.

III. The THIRD QUESTION is much more difficult. There are three different opinions of great authority on it, which are defended with much persistency.

1. That of those who maintain that Christ and the Jews ate the lamb, and kept the Passover on the same day. S. Thomas says that Alcuin is the author of this opinion, and

many have adopted it. The following arguments may be added in its favour :—

(1) S. Matthew (verse 17), S. Mark (xiv. 12), and S. Luke (xxii. 7) say that it was the first day of Azymes, when the disciples asked Christ, “Where wilt Thou that we prepare?” and the Law ordered that the lamb should be killed and eaten, and the feast kept on the first day of the Azymes ; the Jews and Christ, therefore, did both on that day.

(2) The disciples, following the custom of all the Jews who kept the feast on that day, asked Christ, “Where wilt Thou that we prepare?”

(3) S. Mark (xiv. 12) says that it was the first day of the Azymes, and S. Luke (xxii. 7). All the Jews, therefore, offered the sacrifice on the same day.

(4) Christ (verse 18) and S. Mark (xiv. 14) directed the disciples to say to a certain man, “Where is my refectory, that I may eat the Pasch with my disciples?” He said this, as the man would know for a certainty that the Jews would all eat the Paschal lamb that night, and, therefore, that he would not refuse to prepare that place for Him in his house.

(5) Because the chief priests and elders of the people said (verse 5 ; *S. Mark* xiv. 2) : “Not on the feast day, lest there should be a tumult among the people”. So that when they said this, it either was the feast day, or a day so near it that they could not put Christ to death before it. They took this counsel, as will be said on verse 3, on the beginning of the fourth day. Either that fourth day, then, or at least the fifth on which Christ ate the lamb, was the feast day of the Jews. On the same day, therefore, both Christ and the Jews ate the lamb, and celebrated the Passover.

(6) S. John (xiii. 1) plainly says that Christ ate the lamb before the festival day of the Pasch, that is, the day before



the Pasch. The following day, therefore, was the Pasch to the Jews ; therefore, they ate the Pasch and kept the feast on the same day as Christ.

(7) S. John (xiii. 29) says : " For some thought, because Judas had the purse, that Jesus had said to him, Buy those things which we have need of for the festival day ". The feast of the Jews, therefore, was either the same or the following day.

(8) S. Matthew (xxvii. 15), S. Mark (xv. 6), S. Luke (xxiii. 17), and S. John (xviii. 39) say that on the same day as that on which Christ was crucified, Barabbas was loosed, as it was usual on the day of the Passover to release any prisoner they would. That day, therefore, was the day of the Jewish Passover.

(9) It is not credible that Christ would have celebrated Pasch at any other time than the Jews. Had He done so He would have been accused before the governor as a criminal against religion, as the priests were seeking causes of accusation against Him from every quarter.

(10) If he had celebrated Pasch contrarily to the custom of the Jews and before the usual day, He would have greatly offended both the man, His host, with whom He supped, and all who knew what He had done ; as now, if anyone whatever, bishop or private person, should keep Pasch before or after the rest of Christendom, he would give offence to all.

(11) If the Jews did not keep the Passover on the same day as Christ, either Christ would have anticipated the day or the Jews deferred it : the Law allowed neither (S. Thomas, *Comm. on S. John* xix.).

(12) If Christ had celebrated the Pasch on another day than the Jews, and been put to death, the truth would not have answered to the figure ; for the true Lamb would not have been slain on the same day as the typical one.

2. THE SECOND opinion is that Christ did *not* celebrate

the Passover on the same day as the Jews, but one day earlier. Of this opinion were Origen (*Tract. xxxv. on S. Matt.*), S. Chrysostom and Theophylact (*On S. John xviii.*), Euthymius (*loc. loc.*), Nicephorus (i. 28). These think that Christ anticipated the true day. Of this on the fourth question.

The following arguments may be brought in favour of this opinion :—

(a) S. John (xviii. 28) says that the Jews, when they accused Christ to the governor, did not go into the Pretorium, lest by entering a profane place they should be defiled, and unable to eat the Passover ; for they had not eaten it yet : but Christ had eaten it the night before. The Jews, therefore, did not eat the lamb and celebrate the Passover on the same day as Christ, but the day after. This argument is forcible and plain, and has justly drawn many great authorities into its support. Some moderns reply, as we find from S. Thomas that Alcuin did, that the Pasch in that place does not mean the lamb, but the Azymes. This would be credible if it were supported by any example or authority. But now they do not prove, nor is it, on the other hand, collected from the Law, that it was necessary that they must be clean to eat the Azymes. There is no command to this effect either in the Law or in their traditions ; and it would have been intolerable to them if they were defiled by things of such slight consequence, and so constantly recurring, that they would hardly have been able to keep themselves undefiled for one day ; and the days of the Azymes were seven, during which whoever ate leavened bread was guilty of death (*Exod. xii. 15*). If this were so, if the defiled could not eat the Azymes, and they were defiled so frequently, and by such slight causes, how many would there have been to be condemned daily even at the festivals ?

Others say that the lamb in that place signifies the

Pasch ; but that the meaning is that they might eat the Pasch on the same night before light, because the night on which the lamb ought to be killed and eaten had not passed. For the Evangelist says, "It was morning, and they went not into the hall, that they might not be defiled, but that they might eat the Pasch" (*S. John* xviii. 28). The above authors are all refuted by the word by which they seek to make their opinion good. I mean "In the morning". For the Law forbade not only that the whole lamb, but that any part of it, should remain till the morning (*Exod.* xii. 10). How, then, if it were morning, could they have both killed and eaten the whole lamb? It was, besides, not so much morning as that it was not yet bright day ; and it is not probable that the Jews, in their rage, brought Christ to the governor before it was light, and before he had risen, lest they should offend him by their untimely intrusion, when it was necessary for them to gain his favour for the condemnation of Christ.

But why then, it may be asked, did *S. John* so carefully, and of design, add the word *mane* to show that the following day had begun to dawn, and thus there did not remain an entire day to that on which the Jews were to celebrate the Pasch, and, therefore, if they had been defiled then, they would not have had time to purify themselves, to do which they required at least one day? The argument, therefore, is firmly established that the Jews celebrated the Pasch the day after Christ.

(*b*) These are the words of *S. John* (xix. 14): "And it was the parasceue of the Pasch about the sixth hour". *S. John* speaks of the time when Christ was condemned and crucified, and he calls the day the parasceue of the Pasch, that is, the day before the Pasch. The Jews, therefore, had not yet celebrated the Pasch.

It has been answered that the meaning is not that it was the parasceue of the Pasch, that is, the day before the

Pasch, but that it was the parasceue of the Sabbath which had fallen on the day of the Pasch, as if the Evangelist had said, "The parasceue was on the day of Pasch". This is proved :

*a.* By our nowhere reading that the Pasch had a parasceue; nor was there need of one, as the parasceue was only the day before a feast on which it was not lawful to prepare what was necessary for subsistence. Hence it was called by the Greeks *παρασκευή*, and by the Hebrews סִבְבָּה "preparation," because on that day whatever was necessary for the day following was prepared; but on the day of the Pasch the Law did not forbid, it rather allowed what was required to be prepared (*Exod.* xii. 16).

*β.* Again, we never read of a parasceue, but of the Sabbath, as *S. Matt.* xxvii. 62; *S. Luke* xxiii. 54; and more clearly *S. Mark* xv. 42. As if explaining what parasceue meant, he calls it *προσάββατον*, "the day before the Sabbath".

All this is true, and may be granted; but it cannot be granted that S. John by the parasceue of the Pasch meant the same as if he had said the parasceue of the Sabbath, which was the day of the Pasch. This expression is not less hard and senseless than if one should say that when the feast of S. John the Baptist is kept on the day before the feast of Corpus Christi, anyone speaking of that day should call it the Vigil of S. John the Baptist: not because it was the Vigil of S. John the Baptist, but because it was the Vigil of Corpus Christi, which had fallen upon the feast of S. John the Baptist; which would be matter of ridicule. S. John. therefore, called it the parasceue of Pasch; although Pasch had no parasceue *suo instituto*; because, as will be explained on the fourth question, the Pasch that year had fallen upon the Sabbath; and because the Sabbath has a parasceue, and it (the Sabbath) fell that year upon the Pasch. S. John rightly called the day preceding, on which Christ was crucified, the Preparation of Pasch: that by

one word the reader might understand that the day following was both the Sabbath, because it had a parasceue; and the Pasch, because he called that day the parasceue of the Pasch, which no one could have understood had he called it the parasceue.

(c) The third argument is what S. John says (xix. 31), that that was a great Sabbath; as if it were not any ordinary one, but more holy and noble that year than any other year. But it could not be so unless the Pasch were celebrated that same day. In this sense it was a great day, because it was both the Sabbath and the Pasch.

The answer of some who hold the former opinion is, that "S. John did not call that Sabbath great because the Jews celebrated Pasch on it, but because it was one of the days of Azymes". But this has nothing to do with S. John's subject. He gave the reason of the Jews' asking Pilate to break the legs of Christ and the thieves, both that they could not be taken down from the cross on the Sabbath, and that it was unbecoming that they should remain on it, especially as that was a great day. To this the Azymes were no impediment, as it was lawful to work on any day but the first and the last (*Exod.* xii. 16). So that no greatness or sanctity attached to that Sabbath. The meaning is, that it was the great day of the Sabbath, because it was both Sabbath and Pasch, on neither of which it was lawful to take down the bodies and bury them, or to leave them on the cross, that the holiness of the day might not be defiled by the presence of the dead bodies.

(d) The fourth reason is taken from *S. Matt.* (verse 5) and *S. Mark* (xiv. 2): "Not on the feast day, lest there should be a tumult among the people". In these words the Council did not mean that the death of Christ should be put off till after the feast, as they think who say that Christ kept the Pasch on the same day as the Jews; but

they the rather wished to hasten His death before the day of Pasch arrived, which would be two days hence. This was more in accordance with their hatred and cruelty.

*a.* Some take the meaning to be, that they should endeavour to put Christ to death that same night, before dawn, and before the day of the Pasch broke, which was to be celebrated both by Christ and themselves the day after ; but the Jews had not discovered any means of seizing Christ.

*β.* Others think that they wished to defer the day ; but the opportunity of the traitor Judas having offered, who could betray Christ with a kiss and deliver Him up to them without any disturbance, they changed their design ; and on the same day as that on which they celebrated the Pasch, they seized and condemned Him.

But these, again, forget the words of the Jews : “ Lest, perhaps, there should be a tumult ”. This might have been caused, not so much by Christ’s seizure, as by His death. For the treachery of Judas could not prevent this, and their discovery of his willingness to betray Christ could not have caused them to change their intention. Nor do they so much seize the opportunity of Judas, as he seized theirs ; for, when he understood that they were consulting about the seizure of Christ, he, covetous and perfidious as he was, and desiring of finding purchasers, would not lose the opportunity of selling his Master.

(*e*) The fifth is *S. John* xiii. 1 : “ Before the festival day of the Pasch, Jesus knowing His hour was come that He should pass out of this world to His Father ”. It is not doubtful that *S. John*, by the words, “ before the feast of Pasch,” did not mean *any* day preceding Pasch, but the nearest : the one immediately before it. But it is in question whether *S. John* is to be understood of the Pasch which Christ celebrated, or that of the Jews ; but it is much more likely, as said above, that *S. John* spoke of the Pasch of the Jews when he mentioned the Supper of

Christ, and His washing their feet, which was done at the beginning of the day on which He celebrated the Pasch. S. John, therefore, would not have said, "before the festival day of the Pasch," but on the festival day, if he had been speaking of the Pasch of Christ; as S. Matthew (verse 17) and S. Mark (xiv. 12) said, "on the first day of Azymes," when they spoke not of the Supper itself, that is, the celebration of the Pasch, but of its preparation, which ought to take place the day before the Pasch. As, then, because S. John wished to make known by what acts Christ showed that singular love of His disciples, of which he said, "He loved them unto the end" (*in finem*), He showed it not by eating the Paschal lamb which He had done every year, but by washing their feet, and by the showing forth of His Body and Blood, which He had not done before.

These two acts were done, as S. John shows, when the typical supper of the lamb was over; and that could not have been until much of the night, that is, the day of the Pasch, had passed, so that he could not truly say that they were done "before the festival day of the Pasch". For, what some say, that the feast day ought to be understood for the conventional day, from the rising to the setting of the sun, which had not yet arrived, because it was not used, cannot easily be admitted. It remains, therefore, that S. John spoke of the Pasch of the Jews, which was common and known to all, and of which alone the reader could understand what was said.

(f) The sixth is from the same chapter (xiii. 29), when Christ said to Judas, "That which thou dost, do quickly". The disciples thought He meant that he should "buy those things which we have need of for the festival day"; which agrees better if that Pasch of which Christ spoke had not yet come, but was close at hand. For that which Christ Himself kept had come; for when He spoke He had eaten the lamb.

(g) If on the day on which Christ died and had celebrated the Pasch, there had been the Pasch of the Jews as well, it would not have been lawful for Joseph, a just man, and those who assisted him, to take down the body of Christ from the cross and bury it, since the holy women themselves would not go into the tomb when they wished to anoint Christ, because of the Sabbath (*S. Luke* xxiii. 56).

(h) The eighth reason. It is scarcely to be believed that the chief priests and elders of the people, who professed to be the guardians of religion, and chiefly accused Christ, because He appeared to be a violator of it, would seek to violate it themselves by His accusation: as they would have done if on the very day of the Pasch, of all days, the most holy and the most noted, they had brought a capital accusation against Christ, when it was not lawful for them to bring forward any cause, even the lightest, on any feast day. They did, indeed, some things on that Sabbath which they had no right to do, but which seemed of much less consequence; namely, they went to Pilate, and asked to have charge of the tomb, lest the disciples of Christ should steal Him away. They came to the tomb, and placed guards and sealed it. But all this, as before said, was of less consequence than carrying a man off to judgment even from the midst of the people, accusing him, condemning him, and nailing him to the cross, on the very feast day of the Pasch. Lastly, it may be believed that if they did not fear God, they may have feared the people: lest they should be aroused by seeing a man dragged away to death on the very day of the Pasch, and he one whom the greater number of them believed to be a most holy prophet; and should rise and put themselves to death. It was from this fear that they said, "Not on the festival day, lest there should be a tumult among the people".



This opinion appears more probable, because if it have fewer, it most certainly has stronger, arguments in its favour, and which can be answered with much less ease than those which are brought in support of the other opinion. For, in the first place, S. Matthew (verse 17), S. Mark (xiv. 12), and S. Luke (xxii. 7) call the day on which Christ ate the lamb the first day of the Azymes; and that the Pasch was the first day of Azymes is easily solved. The Evangelists spoke not from the tradition of the Jews (on which, see question four), but from the Law. But, according to the Law, the day on which Christ ate the lamb was the true Pasch. They wished, perhaps, when they marked the time so accurately, and said that it was the first day of Azymes, silently to signify this: that it was not the Jews, but Christ, who celebrated Pasch at the proper time. And when the disciples asked Christ where He wished them to prepare the Pasch, it was not the first day of Azymes even by the Law; for it cannot be doubted that they asked this on the fourteenth day of the first month, before the setting of the sun. For after this, they would have asked it too late, for at that period of time they had not to prepare, but to eat, the Pasch. For the fourteenth day was not the first day of the Azymes; but they said the first day of Azymes, because that day was at hand: as if they said, "the first day of Azymes being at hand". As then, when the first day of Azymes was not yet come, that is, the Pasch, they said, "the first day of the Azymes," that is, the Pasch of the Jews; so, when it was not yet the first day of the Azymes, because it was very near, they could say that it was the first day of Azymes; for the Evangelists do not always keep to the exact point of time, but sometimes in the ordinary manner say what is certain truth; as when one says that Christ was crucified at the third hour, and another at the sixth, because He was crucified between the two.

This is not said because it is supposed to be true, for the Evangelists appear in this place to have spoken of the day of Azymes and the Pasch of Christ, but to show that, if the argument can be refuted in no other way, it can be in this.

(2) The second can be answered thus. The disciples were told by Christ that He would celebrate the Pasch before the other Jews, on the day ordered by the Law. For He had already said to them, "You know that after two days shall be the Pasch". S. Luke (xxii. 7, 8, 9) shows the same thing more clearly. From this it is plain that Christ had indicated to the Apostles that He wished to keep the Pasch on the day following, before they asked where He wished them to prepare it; but the other Evangelists have passed this over. S. Luke has stated it.

(3) The third may be answered as follows. The Evangelists spoke, not of the Passover of the Jews, but of that of Christ, that is, the lawful Pasch; and in the words, "On which it was necessary that the Pasch should be killed," S. Luke wished, perhaps, to show, that although Christ kept it before the other Jews, yet that He kept it at the proper time at which, by the Law, the lamb ought to be killed. As for S. Mark's words, "the first day of the unleavened bread," we must understand them not of the Jews then living, but either of the Ancients who followed the Law, and not their traditions, or of Christ and His disciples; the meaning being that it was the first day of the Azymes on which the Jews of old celebrated Pasch, or that on which Christ and His disciples would celebrate it.

(4) To the fourth the answer is, that although the Jews that year put off the feast one day, as shall be afterwards shown, everyone knows that it ought to be kept, according to the Law, on the day on which Christ was about to keep it, and, therefore, that host could not have been surprised if Christ celebrated it on that day, as all knew that He kept the Law of God, and not the traditions of the Pharisees.

(5) The fifth is answered more easily. The words, "Not on the festival day, lest there should be a tumult among the people," do not prove that it was now the day of the feast ; for, as will be shown on verse 3, these words were spoken by them on the twelfth or thirteenth day of the month, and some think even six days before the Pasch, so that it cannot be concluded from them that the Jews kept Pasch on the same day as Christ. For although the Pasch both of Christ and the Jews was at hand, that of neither had actually arrived. As, then, the Jews could have said this if they had celebrated Pasch on the same day as Christ, so they could say it if they kept it one day later. They only meant that they ought to be diligent and alert in performing the deed before the feast day came, which, if distant two days, or three, or even six, as some think, was still at hand.

(6) The sixth may be answered thus. When S. John said, "Before the day of Pasch," he spoke of the Pasch of the Jews, the day before which, when He had eaten the lamb and kept His own Pasch, Christ showed those proofs of the singular love of which S. John speaks, as has been mentioned above.

(7) The seventh is of slight consequence, and a great argument has been urged by us before from the same proof to show the contrary opinion.

(8) The eighth may be answered thus : (i.) The governor used to release the prisoner whom the Jews demanded, either not on the feast day, but on the day before—a thing not without example, and very likely to have been done then ; or (ii.) he may have released Barabbas not on the day on which Christ was crucified, but on the following one, which the Jews kept that year as Pasch, but the Evangelists said that it was done on the day before because the promise was given on that day to the Jews, to be carried into effect on the day following.

(9) The ninth may be answered thus. The priests who accused Christ either did not know that He had eaten the lamb that night, or they did not venture to bring it up against Him as an offence, as they knew that He kept His own Pasch by the Law.

(10) The tenth has already been answered. No one could have been offended, because all knew that, by the Law, the Pasch should be kept on the day on which Christ kept it.

(11) To this question it may be answered that neither did Christ anticipate, nor the Jews defer, the time. Christ kept the feast according to the Law ; and the Jews according to their traditions.

(12) And thus the last argument is disposed of ; for as Christ kept the Pasch on the day ordered by the Law, and on the same day was put to death, the truth rightly answered to the figure.

It has been said that there are three opinions on this question. There is therefore one left, of which only one authority seems to speak. Rupertus thinks that the Jews kept the Pasch, partly on the same day as that on which Christ suffered, and partly on the following day. On the same day, because they sacrificed and ate the lamb on the same night as Christ : the day after, because they kept not that day ; but the day following was kept by them as a feast, that they might not be compelled to rest and be idle on two consecutive days—the following being the Sabbath.

This appears to be credible : especially as we learn from S. John that the Jews had not yet eaten the Passover on the day of Christ's death. It might be more correct, therefore, to say, as some others have done, that the Jews kept the feast on the same day as Christ, but that they ate the Paschal lamb on the day following.

4. The fourth question now remains to be answered. This, although the most difficult, has been fully answered

in the third. It has been asked which of the two, Christ or the Jews, kept Pasch at the right time, if they did not keep it at the same time? Origen (*Tract. xxxv. on S. Matt.*), S. Chrysostom, Theophylact (*On S. John xviii.*), and Euthymius (*in loc.*), think that Christ anticipated by one day the time of celebrating Pasch as ordered by the Law. S. Chrysostom and Theophylact give as the reason of this, that He might delay His death to the following day, which was that of the Pasch. But the reasons they give appear to refute them. For if Christ pleased to die on the day of Pasch, that the true Lamb might fulfil the typical one, since He kept the Passover on the night preceding, that is, on the same natural day according to the Jews, it follows that He did not anticipate the time, but celebrated the Pasch on the appointed day. Nor is it any way credible, as before said, that Christ kept Pasch before the lawful day, as in all things to the end of His life, as S. Chrysostom says, He kept the Law *ad perfectum*, and never anticipated the time appointed by the Law. This opinion, with the arguments in support of it, has been sufficiently answered under the first question.

Some think that Christ kept the Pasch indeed on the appointed day, but that the Jews deferred it to the following one, only that they might not be prevented by the feast from putting Christ to death. SS. Augustin and Jerome think this ; but they are fully refuted by S. Thomas (*Comm. on S. John xviii.*), because both the Law and custom directed that one who might be unclean, or otherwise prevented from keeping Pasch on the day appointed, should keep it on the fourteenth of the following month (*Numb. ix. 10, 11*).

It seems to be concluded that neither did Christ anticipate Pasch, nor did the Jews defer it ; and yet that they did not keep it on the same day. Christ followed the prescript of the Law ; and the Jews, the tradition of the fathers.

Rupertus (*in loc.*), and Paul Bergensis after him, show most fully and carefully that, after the return from Babylon, the Jews made a law that when the Pasch fell on the sixth day of the week, it should be deferred to the day following, that there might not be two feast days running, which would have been a burden to the people ; as they could not bury their dead, nor perform any other works of piety not especially laborious on festivals. They have proved this tradition by many testimonies from the Rabbis. But Paul Bergensis, a man of great diligence and probity, says that he found, with a learned Jew, from the Hebrew Calendar, that on the year in which Christ was crucified the Pasch fell on the sixth day of the week. Christ, therefore, both kept the Passover, as ordered by the Law, and was crucified on that day. But the Jews celebrated the feast on the following day, as directed by their ancestors. Rabbi Abraham, in his *Commentary on Levit. xxiii.*, says that it was found in the Mishna and Thalmud that the Pasch fell sometimes on the second day and sometimes on the fourth and sixth ; but I know not whether he denies, on that account, that when it fell on the sixth it was transferred to the Sabbath, or whether he is of sufficient authority to induce us, for his sake, to abandon the opinion of others.

*Shall be the Pasch.*

The feast of Pasch shall be celebrated, or the lamb slain. The word Pasch means both.

*And the Son of man.*

Christ speaks of Himself as usual in the third person. Why he is called the Son of man has been explained on chap. viii. 20.

*Shall be delivered up.*

*Παραδίδοται*, “is,” for “shall be,” as before. By whom delivered up, the Evangelist does not say. Origen, and S. Thomas in his Commentary, have observed :

(a) That He was delivered up by the Father (*Rom.* viii. 32).

(b) That He was delivered up by Himself (*Gal.* ii. 20 ; *Eph.* v. 2, 25).

(c) By the devil (*S. John* xiii. 2).

(d) By Judas (*S. Matt.* x. 4 ; xxvi. 15, 16).

(e) By the Jews (xxvii. 2 ; *S. Mark* xv. 1 ; *S. John* xviii. 35).

(f) By Pilate to the soldiers (*S. Matt.* xxvii. 26).

He was delivered with a different *animus* by different agents.

(a and b) By Himself and by His Father to redeem men.

(c) By the devil to prevent the Redemption and to incite sinners to that wickedness.

(d) By Judas from avarice.

(e) By the Jews from hatred.

(f) By Pilate from fear, lest he should not appear sufficiently the friend of Cæsar.

This is correct ; but it is not so to say, as the same authorities do, that Christ spoke generally and without limit, not saying by whom He should be delivered up ; that He might include all who would betray Him. For He did not speak of all, but either of the priests, scribes, and elders alone, or of Judas with them ; as in chaps. xvi. 21 ; xx. 18, 19.

In the words "delivered up," He appears to point to some fault or blame. These in Judas and the priests were the greatest possible.

It may be a matter of doubt why Christ said this to His disciples. His object appears to have been to show His Divinity ; for He knows the future, when they who were to deliver Him did not even know at what time they would put Him to death, and disputed among themselves about it : "Not on the festival day".

*To be crucified.*

A manner of punishment then in common use. It had been introduced by the Romans, as shall be explained on chap. xxvii. 35. Christ says that He shall be delivered up to be crucified, because He was given up to Pilate by the Jews to that end, when they cried, "Crucify Him, crucify Him" (*S. Luke* xxiii. 21). Christ, as has been said, spoke most especially of them.

*Verse 3. Then.*

It is doubtful what exact time is meant. Some think that it was six days before the Passover, when S. John says that the chiefs of the priests assembled to deliberate about putting Christ to death. If so, the word does not mean the time of which the Evangelist spoke, but one that was not far off; as if he had said, "about that time". It is more probable, as is the general belief of the Church, that this assembly was held two days before the Pasch; that is, at that time when Christ said to the disciples, "after two days". For the Evangelist in using the word "then" seems to signify the same time as that when the priests said that Christ should not be put to death on the feast day; Christ Himself had said that He should be slain then, to show that the divine decree and the prediction of Christ were of more avail than the counsels of the Jews.

*Were gathered together the chief priests.*

S. Matthew implies, in the same place, that there was both one chief priest, and that there were many; as explained on chap. ii. 4. The Greek reads "Scribes," which the Latin does not. It is very likely that Christ joined these to the chief priests and elders, as related in *S. Mark* xiv. 1; *S. Luke* xxii. 2; and above, chap. ii. 4. These constituted the Jewish council—viz., the chief priests, that is, the heads of the priestly families; with the chief priest, who was



merely called *princeps sacerdotum* ; the Scribes, who were doctors of the Law, the elders of the people ; like the three estates of a republic (*vid.* chap. ii. 4).

*Into the court.*

*Εἰς τὴν αὐλήν, In aulam.* In one word, in the hall. Some take this to mean the palace of the high priest. It does not appear probable that a clandestine assembly, about putting to death a man of the greatest holiness, would have been held in the court, that is, the actual entrance of the house, and in the place of open judgment. Athenæus (lib. v.) says that *αὐλή* among the Greeks meant the palace of the king ; as *aula* in Latin is synonymous with *regia* (the palace) ; as they who frequented it were called *auliei*, our version always renders it *atrium* (court), as here and *infra*, verses 58, 69 ; *S. Mark* xiv. 54, 66 ; *S. Luke* xi. 21 ; xxii. 55 ; *S. John* xviii. 15 ; *Apoc.* xi. 2 ; and perhaps more correctly than if it read "palace". For, from verse 58, it is clear that the place of which the Evangelist speaks, and which he calls *αὐλή*, was not so much the house, or some large hall of the house, but an open space before the house, which the Latins call *cors* or *chors*, the French *cour*, Italians and Spaniards *corte*. For *S. Matthew* says that *S. Peter* followed Him "afar off" (verse 58, and more clearly verse 69). The *atrium*, therefore, was without, and so says *S. Mark* (xiv. 68 ; xv. 16) ; that is, where they led Him from the interior of the house where the governor was, into the outer court where the soldiers and people were assembled together to mock Christ, when they had put on Him the purple robe.

*Who was called Caiaphas.*

A very avaricious and abandoned man, for an account of whom *vide Josephus (Antiq., xviii. 3, 6).*

*And they consulted together.*

*Καὶ συνεβουλεύσαντο*, "They took counsel unanimously".

*That by subtlety they might apprehend Jesus.*

Secretly and by fraud, not by open violence ; for they feared the people, as S. Luke says (xxii. 2).

*And put Him to death.*

All their designs tended to this result, for they had often endeavoured to kill Him before. How they conducted their deliberations is related by S. John at full length (xi. 47, 50). This council, however, was apparently a different one to that of which S. Matthew speaks. For the former was held six days before Pasch, as appears from the beginning of chap. xii., and the latter only two days before it, as has been said before.

Verse 5. *But they said, Not on the feast day.*

It is not certain whether it was the intention of the Jews to execute the crime before the day of the feast, or to postpone it till afterwards. They who think that the Jews kept the feast on the same day as Christ suppose that they meant to postpone it until the next day, but that they afterwards found Judas ready to betray Christ, and so they altered their intention. This has been answered on verse 2. They who think that the Jews celebrated the feast a day after Christ suppose that they would have had Him put to death before the feast day. Some, again, take the festival day to mean all the seven days of Azyme, because all those days were called festival days, each in its own manner. Others, again, apparently with more reason, would take the meaning to include only the festival day of Pasch and the Sabbath, on which days it was not lawful to accuse, condemn, or crucify anyone ; and they would therefore justly fear that the people would be excited to a

tumult if they pursued a design so audacious and nefarious on those days. This reason, however, would not apply to the other days of the Azymes.

*Lest perhaps there should be a tumult.*

*Γένηται.* First, it may be asked why they feared the people? We may safely say, *salva pietate*, that they did not fear lest any of the people should perish in a sedition, or religion be overthrown, but lest, when an infinite concourse of people came together to the festival, Christ might be rescued out of their hands, as S. Jerome, Bede, and Euthymius say. Besides, in so great a multitude there might be some who believed in Christ, and who would endeavour to deliver Him from the power of the priests. We may suppose, too, that they feared for themselves, lest the excited populace might make an attack upon them, and put them to death: because, as S. Chrysostom and Theophylact say, they would not have endured that on the day of Pasch, when those who were condemned to death were set free, Christ, a man most innocent, should be dragged off to His destruction. The same fear had often on previous occasions tied their hands (*S. Mark* xi. 18; xii. 12; *S. Luke* xx. 19; xxii. 2).

Verse 6. *And when Jesus was in Bethania.*

There is here a narration much discussed and of much interest. First, whether there was one woman, or, secondly, whether there were more, who anointed Christ, as related in this place, and in *S. Mark* xiv. 3; *S. Luke* vii. 38; and *S. John* xii. 3.

The question will be more easy if divided into parts. On the first question there are three parts:

1. Is the Simon at whose house Christ dined—or supped, as *S. Luke* says—the same as the Simon whom *S. Matthew* and *S. Mark* call Simon the leper, but whom *S. John* does not mention?

2. Is the same woman mentioned by the four Evangelists as the one who anointed Christ ?

3. If the same, did she anoint Christ once or more than once ?

1. As regards Simon with whom Christ supped, S. Augustin (*De Cons.*, ii. 69), Bede (*Comm. on S. Luke* vii.), and Euthymius (*in loc.*) think that there were two Simons, one the Pharisee of S. Luke, the other the leper of S. Matthew, whom S. Mark and S. John do not mention. The reasons are—1st, that what S. Luke relates, happened in Galilee, but this of S. Matthew in Bethania, *i.e.*, near Jerusalem ; and, 2nd, that the former was a Pharisee, the latter a leper. Another reason might be added. It is not probable that this Simon of S. Matthew was a Pharisee, as the above event took place when the Passion of Christ was at hand, when the whole sect of Pharisees was utterly opposed to Him, and no Pharisee would have been likely to receive Him as his guest. S. Chrysostom, however (*Hom.* lxxxii. *on S. Matt.*), and S. Ambrose (lvi. *on S. Luke* vii.) think that they were the same Simon. This view seems the more probable of the two, for the following reasons :

(1) Both were called Simon ; and although this was a common name, the identity of the names may have some weight.

(2) Because it was the same woman, as shall be proved by and by, who is said by S. Luke and S. Matthew to have anointed Christ, and who, as she came so freely and so often to Simon's house to anoint Christ, was probably an intimate acquaintance of his ; and as he lived in Bethania, it follows that he was the same Simon. For S. Luke does not say where the event took place, and, like S. Matthew, he calls Simon the host of Christ. S. Matthew tells us that it happened in Bethania. We must believe that it also happened in the same place. It is probable, too, that the Simon of whom S. Luke writes, when he first received

Christ into his house as his guest, had been taught by Him, so as afterwards to be His intimate, and to receive Him often as his guest, when He came to Bethania.

2. On the second question there is much difference of opinion. Origen (*Tract. xxxvi. on S. Matt.*) thinks it probable that there were four different women mentioned by the four Evangelists, who all anointed Christ. But this does not appear to be a matter open to discussion. Because it seems very plain that S. Matthew, at least, and S. Mark, as his abbreviator, relate the same event as having happened in the same place, and at the same time, and that they speak of the same woman ; so that if there had been more than one, there must have been no more than three women : one, of whom S. Luke speaks ; another, of whom S. Matthew and S. Mark speak ; and a third, of whom S. John speaks. This opinion is received, in fact, by Origen, Theophylact (*Comment. in loc.*), and Euthymius. They suggest, also, and with some probability, that the woman of whom S. Luke speaks was called a sinner ; but she of whom S. Matthew and S. Mark make mention was not a sinner, but, rather, was gifted with something of prophecy (verses 10, 12). Besides, the woman in *S. Luke* anointed Christ a long time before His pass-over, as we see from his account ; the woman of S. Matthew and S. Mark only two days before His death, as in verse 2 ; the woman of whom S. John writes did so six days before (xii. 1).

Others think that there were two, but they differ as to who they were. S. Jerome (*in loc.*) and S. Bernard (*Serm. de Mar. Magd.*) think that there was one, of whom S. Luke writes, and another, a second, of whom we read in S. Matthew, S. Mark, and S. John ; the one of S. Luke being different to this one of S. Matthew, because the former anointed Christ long before Pasch and the death of Christ, the latter on the eve of it. The former anointed His feet

only, the latter His feet and head, as will be explained hereafter. The latter, of whom SS. Matthew, Mark, and John write, they hold to be one and the same, because she anointed Christ at the same time and in the same place.

S. Chrysostom (*On S. Matt.*, lxxxi. ; and *On S. John*, lxi.), Leontius, and Theophylact (*On S. John*, xi. 1) take the woman of whom SS. Luke, Matthew, and Mark write to have been the same ; but the one spoken of by S. John to have been a different one, because SS. Luke, Matthew, and Mark say that she anointed Christ in the house of Simon ; but S. John says not in the house of Simon, but rather in that of Lazarus or his sisters ; for he says that Martha served at the tables.

Some think that there was only one, as S. Augustin (*De Cons.*, ii. 69), S. Gregory (*Hom.* xxxv. *in Evang.*), Bede (*in loc.* ; and *S. Luke*, vii.). This seems much the more probable, because :

(1) The unspoken voice of the Church points to this conclusion.

(2) S. John, wishing to mention Mary, the sister of Lazarus and Martha, said (xi. 2) : "And Mary was she that anointed the Lord with ointment, and wiped His feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick". He would scarcely have said this if there had been more women than one who anointed Christ's feet ; for the reader could not have understood which one he meant of the many. All the arguments—and they are many—which go to show that there were more than one have less weight than this one.

(3) S. Luke's statement that the anointing was a long time before is of no weight to prove that the woman was different, but only that the act itself was so ; which is freely allowed, and will shortly be proved.

(4) That the fact that the former anointed the feet and the latter the head proves nothing ; or, the same thing,

that there was not one single anointing, but a second one. And although S. Luke does not expressly say so, it is probable that the woman mentioned by him anointed the head of Christ ; for, as we shall show, it was the custom of the country to anoint not only the feet, but also the head, at feasts, and it is not to be supposed that a holy woman would pass over the head, from which the anointing began, and anoint only the feet. There is a similar explanation in *S. John*. For whilst we find, from S. Matthew and S. Mark, that the same woman, a second time, on the eve of the passover of Christ, anointed His head, S. John mentions only His feet, because he probably thought that no one would suppose the feet to have been anointed and not the head. S. Luke, therefore, and S. John mentioned that part of the person which was not generally anointed, to show thereby that the part which it was the custom to anoint was so anointed now, and to set forth the woman's extraordinary love and zeal to Christ ; for she wiped His feet with the hairs of her head—a thing singular and not usual. This Christ spoke of to Simon (*S. Luke* vii. 44-6) : “ I entered into thy house, thou gavest Me no water for My feet ; but she with tears hath washed My feet, and with her hair hath wiped them. . . . My head with oil thou didst not anoint ; but she with ointment hath anointed My feet.” As if to say : “ Thou didst not anoint My head as is customary ; she has anointed not only My head, but also My feet, which it is not”. That S. Luke calls the former a sinner, while the latter, of whom the other Evangelists speak, was not a sinner, but a holy woman, is no argument that it was a different person, but that she who anointed Christ was at different times of a different disposition, as S. Augustin and Bede rightly observe.

The other arguments, if there are any, shall be answered under the third question.

3. It was asked before whether there was one act of

anointing, or more than one? They who maintain that there were more women than one must necessarily say that there were more acts than one. They who say that there was only one woman are not compelled to say that there was only one act, though many do say so. Some say that there was one woman, who anointed Christ three times, as related :

1. By S. Luke, long before the Passion.
2. By S. John, six days before Pasch.
3. By SS. Matthew and Mark, two days before the Passion. Others say there was one woman who anointed twice :

1. Long before the Passion—S. Luke.
2. When the Passion was imminent—SS. Matthew, Luke, and John ; S. Ambrose (vii. *S. Luke*) ; S. Augustin (*De Consens.*, ii. 69) ; and Bede (*in loc.*). This opinion seems the most probable of any.

It was shown in the former question that there was one woman. It has now to be shown that she anointed twice. This may be proved by almost the same arguments as have been used to prove that there were different women, viz., that there was at first a sinner, then a holy woman ; that one anointed long before the Passion, the other when it was close at hand. Some have added that then she anointed the feet only, now the head, as if, being a sinner, she were unworthy to touch the head of Christ, as S. Augustin and Bede say. This has been answered before. It has now to be proved that she anointed Christ not oftener than twice, as some say. It is proved thus. If she anointed thrice, the act related by SS. Matthew and Mark is one ; that related by S. John is another, for it is plain that that related by SS. Matthew and Mark is the same and not different. It is shown by many circumstances that S. John relates the same act and not a different one. It was done in the same place—Bethania ; by the same kind



of ointment—spikenard, very precious ; there was the same murmuring of the Jews, the same defence by Christ ; for how can it be thought that, if Christ only four days before had rebuked the same murmurer, he would complain again of an act every way so similar, if not the same, and so soon after ?

There are two things only which seem to be in some measure at variance with this view.

1. S. John said that the act was done six days before Pasch ; SS. Matthew and Mark only two. But S. Augustin and Bede rightly reply that SS. Matthew and Mark spoke by an ἀνακεφαλαίωσις : for, not keeping the exact order, when they had said, “after two days,” &c., they resumed the account of what had been done six days before the Pasch, which they had not related before, as not being required ; but which they related now because it was now necessary to declare the treachery of Judas in lying in wait to sell Christ ; he being a very avaricious man, and taking it amiss, not that the ointment was poured out of the vessel, but that the price of it escaped his hands, as S. John explains fully (xii. 6) : “Now he said this, not because he cared for the poor ; but because he was a thief, and, having the purse, carried the things which were put therein”.

2. The second question has been already explained ; that in *S. Matthew* and *S. Mark* the woman appears to have anointed only the head, and in *S. John* only the feet of Christ ; but, as S. Augustin says, it is often found that S. Matthew describes one part of an act and S. John another. A probable reason may be given for this. S. John set forth not merely the Passion of Christ, but His entire history, keeping the order of time, and desired to explain the singular love of the woman for Christ. He, therefore, omits the anointing of the head, which was usual ; and mentions that of the feet, which was uncommon.

But the object of SS. Matthew and Mark was not to commend the singular feeling of the woman, but to show the avariciousness of Judas, which impelled him to sell Christ ; they, therefore, describe the whole treacherous transaction, and the order of the Passion ; in which it was nothing to the purpose to say whether the woman washed the head or the feet. Thus they have only related what was ordinarily done ; that she anointed the head. What most especially bore upon their design they have most carefully described—that the ointment was of great price. This inflamed the avarice and cupidity of Judas, which they designed to publish.

The sum of the whole is therefore—

1. That it was the same Simon who received Christ as his guest, and whom many believe to have been healed with others by Christ of his leprosy ; though Theophylact says that some think him to have been the same as he with whom Christ, with His disciples, took the Last Supper ; but this will be refuted at verse 18.

2. That there was one woman, and that she was the sister of Lazarus and Martha, who was called Magdalena as appears from S. John (xi. 2), and out of whom Christ cast seven devils (*S. Mark* xvi. 9).

*In the house of Simon the leper.*

S. Jerome and Bede rightly say that Simon was not then a leper, for Christ would not have gone to his house had he been one ; and assuredly he could not have lived in the city, for lepers were set apart from other men. But he might have been a leper at some past time, and have been cured, but have kept the name. We have just said that it is the opinion of some that he had been healed by Christ. This is the more likely, as he showed extraordinary love for Him, as if grateful for some benefit. The idea does not appear a necessary one. He must

have been called a leper, though not such, from some disease resembling leprosy, or because one of his forefathers, who was a leper, bore that name ; as we see men called red, or bearded, or shaven, though not literally such. It may be asked why SS. Matthew and Mark do not call him a Pharisee, nor S. Luke a leper. The enquiry is hardly worth raising, but we may conjecture that when S. Luke was relating the commencement of Christ's preaching, he wished to show the quality of the person by whom He was entertained, that it might be known that some even of the Pharisees received Him. As SS. Matthew and Mark had not this object in view, they would not term him a Pharisee, because it was not his cognomen, but the ordinary name of a sect ; while they did style him a leper, because it was such.

Verse 7. *Having an alabaster box of ointment.*

Many say that alabaster boxes were made from a stone (alabaster), in which ointments were kept, because the material preserved the odour for a long time. They cite Pliny (xiii. 2 ; xxiv. 8). The account of S. Mark (xiv. 3) is opposed to this. For how could the box have been so easily broken if made of this material ?

Some say that she poured out the ointment first, and then broke the vessel when there was no more ointment left in it. This hardly seems probable, for S. Mark signifies, not obscurely, that she first broke the vessel and then poured out the ointment, breaking it to do this more effectually—καὶ συντρίψασα τὸ ἀλάβαστρον κατέχευεν αὐτοῦ κατὰ τῆς κεφαλῆς.

Again, reason itself teaches us that she broke the vessel to pour out the ointment more freely, so that none of it should remain in the vessel. In this manner the holy woman showed abundant love, that in anointing Christ she set so little store by the ointment that she even broke the

vessel lest it should retain the least portion of it. For if she had poured out all the ointment, why should she have broken the vessel? She would rather have preserved it, to put fresh ointment into it.

It appears more probable that the vessel was made of some other fragile material called alabaster, either because vessels that held ointment were made of alabaster, or, if of some other material, they bore that name; or they may have been made without handles, such as the dealers in ointments and drugs use; for this is the meaning of the word alabaster, as Suidas tells us.

*Of precious.*

*Βαρυτίμου*, "of heavy value," *gravis pretii*, as the Latins sometimes say, or *πολυτίμου*, as some copies read, and as we find it in *S. John* xii. 3. The word probably applies not only to the quality of the ointment, but also to the quantity, meaning that not only was the ointment so good that a little of it was worth a great deal, but also that it was poured out so copiously that the value of it was great, as Judas said (verse 9): "This might have been sold for much and given to the poor"; and as *S. John* explained when he said that the woman had a pound of it. *S. Mark* and *S. John* seem to warrant this idea. They say that the ointment was both precious and *pisticum*—that is, if we may so explain it, genuine. We will speak of this by and by. That this epithet is applied to the nard and not the ointment is of little consequence. *S. Mark* and *S. John* both describe it as *unguenti nardi pistici*, or, as the Greek is, *νάρδου πιστικῆς*. As these passages are joined with the one now under discussion of *S. Matthew*, we may explain it here by the way. What nard is we learn from the philosophers and physicians. Pliny and Dioscorides inform us about it. We also learn from Holy Scripture that it is a shrub of wondrous fragrance (*Cant.* i. 11; iv. 13, 14). From the word *πιστική* some, as *S. Augustin* (*Tract.* iv. on *S. John*),

have thought that the *pistaccio* was the *nardus* ; but there is no authority for this among cosmographers. The ordinary and more generally received explanation, as we have hinted before, is that *nardus* is called *pisticus* from the Greek word πιστικός, meaning genuine, approved, not tampered with or adulterated. This is the opinion of Euthymius and Theophylact on *S. Mark* xiv. This may be so ; but there are the following objections :

1. The nard is not called πιστική but πιστή, as meaning true, tested.

2. The word πιστή so used is rare and novel. It is not used of inanimate objects. Besides, it is not the nard but the ointment that should be called *pisticum*. For it was not the nard but the ointment that could be adulterated by the artifices and greed of the vendors ; and the Evangelist calls the ointment *pretiosus* and the nard *pisticus*. Lastly, if the ointment were *pisticum* because tested, and of the best quality, it would be *pretiosum*. But the Evangelists distinguish, and call one *pisticum* and the other *pretiosum*.

An author tells us from Athenæus (lib. xvi.) and Pliny (xv. 1) that there were formerly two kinds of ointment in use : one thick and solid, which could not easily be poured, and such as is applied to wounds ; the other liquid, and, as it were, potable, and which is easily poured out. This seems nearer the truth, and it was such as that the Evangelists describe. If so, it is called πιστική, from πίνειν, "to drink". It may be brought against this view that in this sense it is not the nard but the ointment that should be called *pisticum*, for it is the latter that is liquid. The answer is obvious. The word nard is used of an ointment made of nard ; as if it had been written an ointment of nard (*pistici pretiosi*).

It was the custom with the Jews and other ancient nations to have their guests at their entertainments

anointed. Hence the allusion of Christ when He said : " But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thine head " ; that is to say, Pretend to thyself that thou art to be splendidly entertained. Hence the woman, when she anointed Christ twice, did so only at a feast. So in *Ps.* xxii. 5 ; cxi. 5 : " Thou hast anointed my head with oil " ; " Let not the oil of the sinner fatten my head " ; that is, I would suffer injury at the hands of the just rather than be treated well by the wicked.

Verse 8. *And the disciples seeing it.*

So S. Mark (xiv. 4) : " Now there were some that had indignation within themselves, and said, Why was this waste ? " These two Evangelists seem, therefore, to signify that either all or the greater number of the Apostles made this murmuring, and S. Augustin (*De Consens.*, ii. 69) thinks it possible that, whilst Judas was the author and leader, the other Apostles may have either given their assent, or even themselves murmured, though in a different spirit, to Judas ; they from love of the poor, he from avariciousness. It is clear from S. John (xii. 4), however, that Judas alone murmured, as S. Chrysostom, Euthymius, Theophylact, S. Jerome, S. Augustin, and Bede have observed. The other Evangelists speak by syllepsis, as is their frequent custom, as when (*S. Matt.* xiv. 15) the disciples asked Christ whence they could buy bread to feed the five thousand, whilst S. John explains that only Philip did so. But the most notable example of this is the case of the thieves on the cross ; for S. Matthew (xxvii. 44) says that they both reviled Christ, whilst it is beyond doubt, from S. Luke (xxiii. 39), that only one did so.

Verse 9. *And given to the poor.*

S. John informs us of the spirit in which Judas said this (xii. 6).

Verse 10. *And Jesus knowing it.*

Understanding the words and thoughts of Judas, though he spoke apart and silently. The Evangelist wished to show the divinity of Christ, as chaps. ix. 4, xii. 25. In this manner, S. Mark says (xiv. 4, 5), the disciples took it amiss, and murmured among themselves, as if speaking, not in words, but in their hearts. The Greek is *πρὸς ἑαυτοὺς*, *apud se*; that is, among themselves, one with another, in their own minds, Judas being the only exception, which could not escape the knowledge of Christ. This is the meaning of the words, "But Jesus knowing it".

Verse 12. *She hath done it for My burial.*

The Jews used to anoint the bodies of the dead, before burial, with ointments and spices, as we find in *Gen.* i. 2-26; *S. Mark* xvi. 1; *S. Luke* xxiii. 56; xxiv. 1; *S. John* xix. 40. Christ, therefore, signifies that His death was so near that the woman, as if divining it, anointed Him for it. Not that she thought, perhaps, on the subject, but that she anointed Him thus opportunely that she may appear to have done it to this end. The meaning, perhaps, is that she anointed Him now because after His death she would not be able to do so; as S. Mark signified: "What she could she hath done; she is come aforehand to anoint My body for the burial" (xiv. 8). S. John should be received in this or some similar sense: "Let her alone, that she may keep it against the day of My burial" (xii. 7), as meaning: At My burial they would have no ointment; for they brought spices afterwards; suffer her now to keep this ointment for that time; for she keeps it by anointing Me now, as she was about to do. The Greek expresses it more clearly: *τετήρηκεν αὐτό*, "she has kept it"; that is, she has so placed it out by anointing Me that she cannot lose it; as we say of one who has bought an estate that he cannot lose his money, as he might do if he carried

it on his person, or shut it up in a box ; by spending it he preserves it. Christ desired to excuse the act of the woman, which otherwise might have appeared unnecessary, by the use and custom of anointing the dead, and by her piety to Himself ; and at the same time to set her above Judas the murmurer, when he thought of himself in selling, and she thought of Him in anointing, and, in some way burying, Him. Not, perhaps, that she understood what she did, but that she was moved by some silent impulse of the Holy Spirit ; so that her act was not to be blamed, for it was pious in itself, and necessary for the dead, and it proceeded from the promptings of the Holy Spirit.

Some have asked how it was that Christ allowed such luxuries, when His whole life and doctrine were so entirely opposed to such. S. Chrysostom (*Hom. lxxxix. in loc.*) says that if Christ had been consulted beforehand He would not have permitted and approved it, but when done He excused it. But it would appear as if Christ so defended it as, even if He had been consulted beforehand, He would have approved the act ; and it was also impossible that Christ could have been ignorant of the act before it was done, and still He did not prevent it. For He had suffered Himself to be anointed by the same woman at another time and place (*S. Luke vii. 38*), and He not only did not rebuke her, but even gave her praise, and sent her away with her sins forgiven. Christ, therefore, accepted luxuries, not as such, but as the offerings of love. Nor is it a singular fact ; for within the space of three years the act was repeated twice by the same woman ; and an act which was one of love and pity, and which always met with much praise from Christ, should not be without its imitators.

We should learn two lessons from this :

I. That although what is done to the poor Christ considers as done to Himself, as He said (*xxv. 40*), yet that



there is a great difference between the person of Christ and of the poor, and that it is a greater merit and piety to clothe or support Christ Himself than the poor, as has been observed by Theophylact (*in loc.*).

2. That many things which heretics and profane persons think absurd and useless are regarded by Christ as pious and full of charity; such as are ornaments of churches instituted in honour of Christ, but regarded by heretics, like the ancient Gentiles, with derision, as Theophylact says.

Verse 13. *Amen, I say unto you wheresoever this Gospel shall be preached.*

This and *S. Mark* xiv. 9 are the only places, as we have observed in the Preface, where the word *Evangelium* is used for *Evangelica Historia*.

*In the whole world, that also which she hath done shall be told for a memory of her.*

The memory and praise of this woman shall be celebrated wheresoever the Gospel is preached; for all men shall unite in praising her remarkable act. Christ appears to oppose His own judgment and praise of the anointing to the murmurs of Judas and the blame of the whole world; as if He had said: What you wickedly and malignantly blame, men of all ages shall celebrate with endless praise. This, in truth, was foretold (*Ps.* cxi. 7 and *Prov.* x. 7).

Verse 14. *Then went out.*

*S. Chrysostom*, *Theophylact*, *Euthymius*, and others refer the word "then" to the six days before Pasch, when the woman anointed Christ, as in *S. John* xii. 3. Others refer them to the two days referred to in verse 3, when the chief priests and elders met in council to debate on the destruction of Christ. This is the opinion of *Bede*, and seems to be the more common opinion in the Church. The argu-

ment of some, to prove that the Church used to fast on the fourth day, because on that day Judas sold Christ, seems of no weight, because, as S. Augustin and Theophylact say, the Church fasted not for this reason, but because of the council which the chief priests assembled on that day to put Christ to death. The words of S. Matthew (verse 16) seem to be of more weight. For it appears from these that some days before the Pasch Judas had had meetings with the Jews on the subject of the betrayal of Christ. This reason alone may cause doubt as to whether the betrayal happened on the night of the supper or shortly before it: because Christ was not in Jerusalem previously, but at Bethania, and it does not seem probable that Judas would have left the Apostles and come from Bethania to Jerusalem to treat of the betrayal, lest while he was plotting to deliver up Christ he should betray his intention. Yet, as SS. Matthew and Mark say plainly that, from the day on which Judas agreed with the Jews for the price, he sought opportunity to betray Christ, we must believe that this had been agreed upon some days before Pasch, on all which he was seeking his opportunity.

That this was done two days before, and not six, as is the more commonly received opinion, so it is in itself more probable; because, as aforesaid, there were two assemblies of the Jews—that of which S. John speaks (xi. 47, 48; xii. 19), and this of S. Matthew (v. 3) and S. Mark (xiv. 1). In the assembly of S. John, they determined that it was expedient to put Christ to death, Caiaphas the high priest being the chief author of it. In that of SS. Matthew and Mark they consulted, not whether He should be put to death, but how it should be done; and it is therefore certain that Judas had not yet said: “What will you give me, and I will deliver Him to you” (*S. Matt.*, verse 15). For, if so, they would not have discussed the manner of Christ’s capture, but have gladly accepted the conditions of

Judas, as described by S. Mark (xiv. 11) and S. Luke (xxii. 5). It is probable, therefore, that on the same day as that on which the chief priests assembled the second council to deliberate the manner of Christ's capture, Judas came to them and promised his assistance.

*One of the twelve.*

The Evangelist seems to use this expression to show the magnitude of the offence ; that one of Christ's own twelve Apostles and His familiar friend should have sold Him, while a woman, a stranger, and not long since a sinner, did for Him a singular office of love and piety.

*Who was called Judas Iscariot.*

The two names of Judas are mentioned, that no injustice might be done to the other Apostles. For the reader might otherwise have been left in doubt about the others, who were without blame, and he might have suspected some of them ; but the word Iscariot distinguishes him from the other Jude, who is called by S. Luke (vi. 16) the brother of James. This is the opinion of S. Chrysostom, Euthymius, and Theophylact. Why he was called Iscariot has been stated (x. 4).

S. Luke (xxii. 3) says that Satan entered into Judas. This is not to be understood as meaning that he got possession of his body, as with Energumens, but that he inspired him with the most wicked thought of selling Christ ; as Euthymius (*in loc.*) and Didymus (*De Spiritu Sancto*, iii.) have explained, and as appears from S. John xiii. 2. That Satan, therefore, entered into Judas means simply, as is said by S. Luke, that he put it into his mind to betray Christ, as S. John says.

But did not this mean, perhaps, that the devil put it into his heart to steal the contents of the purse and commit other like crimes ? Undoubtedly so ; but why is Satan not said

to have entered into him then? It seems that S. Luke wished to convey the idea of the foulness and profanity of the deed, as if he had said more plainly, It was so wicked an act that only by Satan's entering into him could he possibly have done it; and thus Satan is not said to have entered into him when he was guilty of only lighter offences, although he committed them at the instigation of the same prompter.

Thus we often say, when we see a man committing some more common and less heinous offence, "The devil has deluded him"; but when he perpetrates some unheard of and enormous wickedness, we say that he is a devil incarnate, because but for the suggestions of the devil he could not have committed it. Thus is answered the question, Why, when S. Luke says that "Satan now entered into Judas," S. John (xiii. 27) says that he did not enter into him until the Last Supper, when Judas had received the sop from Christ? For, in fact, Satan did not enter him either now or then; but by inspiring him and inciting him to the final iniquity he entered into him when he persuaded him to sell Christ, and when he incited him to deliver Him up when sold; for S. Luke says that Satan entered at the selling, and S. John when he betrayed Christ; because it was a greater sin to betray Him than to sell Him. This is certain, as Bede and Euthymius have shown that one Evangelist could not contradict the other. Thus God was in no sense the author of the treachery of Judas, as some modern heretics have said. We, indeed, allow that God permitted Judas to sell, but not that He was the author, suggester, or inciter of the act. For there remain the words of S. James (i. 13), which cannot be false.

*To the chief priests.*

S. Luke (xxii. 4) adds *στρατήγοις*, "captains," whom he distinguishes from the chief priests and elders (v. 52), and

calls *στρατήγους* "magistrates of the Temple"; that is, officers who were over, or in charge of, the Temple, who were possibly soldiers whom some of the priests had under them for the safe custody of the Temple, and who were, therefore, called *duces*. For the Jews were not allowed by the arbitrary power of the Romans to have any other military force.

Verse 15. *But they appointed him thirty pieces of silver.*

*Vide* chap. xviii. 8, for a discussion of Jewish silver money, and the various kinds of silver coins used by them; and especially the denarius and siclus (sicle). The siclus, like all other money valued by weight, was two-fold—the profane, which was less; the sacred, which was greater, as Scripture everywhere signifies. There was also among the Romans, under whom the Jews then were, a silver coinage; but it is probable that S. Matthew, a Hebrew, and the author of a Hebrew Gospel, would speak of Hebrew money, and that he said *שְׁלִשִּׁים כֶּסֶף* but the Hebrews call silver, unstamped or coined, and all money, of whatever metal composed, silver. The French do the same, both of silver and other money, because the greatest part is composed of silver. But when a numeral is added, some kind of silver money alone is meant. This is of two kinds—the denarius, which the Hebrews, borrowing from the Latin, call *דנריו* and the sicle, which, perhaps, as being of greater weight, was called *שקל* that is, *pondus* (weight). But when the word *כֶּסֶף* *argentei* (of silver), is put for silver money, unless the kind of coin is specified, it rarely means anything but sicle; and the Chaldee paraphrast, when the Hebrew is *כֶּסֶף* with a numeral, renders it sicle, as in *Gen.* xxxvii. 28; xlv. 22; *Judges* xvi. 5; xvii. 2, 4, 10; 2 *Kings* xviii. 11, 12; 4 *Kings* vi. 25; *Isa.* vii. 23. In other passages, like the Evangelist, he renders it *ἀργυρέους*, *argenteas*, as in *Judges*

xvii. 4-10 ; *Zach.* xi. 12. So Josephus (*Antiq.*, iii. 9 ; ix. 2) renders the word *argenteis* (pieces of silver) of 4 *Kings* vi. 25, which the authors of the books *Misnaioth* have cited, by sicles.

It appears, then, from the custom of the Hebrews, that the *argenteos*, the pieces of silver of which S. Matthew speaks, as no other kind of money is specified, were sicles ; but a silver sicle, as shown above, was equal to one French franc ; that is, twenty silver solidi. An obolus was equal to a French sou, and it is clear, from Scripture (*Exod.* xxx. 13 ; *Levit.* xxvii. 25 ; *Numb.* iii. 47 ; xviii. 16 ; *Ezek.* xlv. 12), that a siclus had twenty oboli. A siclus was four drachmas, and one didrachma was equal to five French sous, or one Spanish real. Four drachmas, therefore, held twenty sous, a French franc, or Tours pound. If this be so, Christ was sold for thirty French francs. If it be objected that the potter's field could not have been bought at the price named (*S. Matt.* xxvii. 7), the answer may be that it could not, perhaps, be done now, when things fetch much higher prices ; but this was possible then, for Jeremiah (xxxii. 9) bought a field for seven staters and ten pieces of silver, which was a much less price.

Verse 17. *And the first day of the Azymes.*

On the Azymes, *vide* verse 2 and following.

Verse 18. *Go ye into the city.*

Two things may here be inferred :

1. That Christ when He said this was not at Jerusalem, but either at Bethania, where He had passed the two preceding days, or on the way thither ; for it is beyond doubt that the city of Jerusalem is intended, at which, when Christ sent the disciples, He Himself had not arrived.

2. The words of the preceding verse (17), "On the first day of the Azymes," are not to be understood as if the day

had arrived, but that it was at hand. For if the Azymes had begun it would have been too late to send the disciples to make preparations for the Pasch ; and the Evangelist implies (verse 20) that the evening had not come when Christ sent the disciples. S. Luke, also (xx. 14), says : " When the hour was come He sat down and the twelve Apostles with Him," as if it had not arrived when He sent them into the city. We are informed by S. Luke (xxii. 8) who the disciples were that were sent.

*To a certain man.*

*Πρὸς τὸν δεῖνα*, to a particular person, but one who is not named. As S. Jerome has observed, the Hebrews express it thus : *לפלמוני*.

It has been doubted whether these are the words of Christ or the Evangelist. They appear to be those of the latter, for Christ would scarcely have used an expression which is not found in Hebrew, Greek, or Latin. But whether Christ mentioned the man by name, or, as we shall shortly prove, He did not do this, but pointed him out by certain signs, the Evangelist would not name him ; though he wished it to be known that Christ sent His disciples, not to a stranger, but to a particular person whom He described to them. If, as is more likely, Christ did not name the man, the Evangelist intended to show this when he wrote that Christ said, " Go ye to a certain man ". We may conclude that Christ did not name him from the description He gave of him (*S. Mark* xiv. 13 ; *S. Luke* xxii. 10). For if Christ had named the man, what need would there have been of any description ? He would have said in one word, Go to Peter or Paul.

S. Jerome and Bede offer as the reason why Christ did not name the man that we may understand by His silence that all men are invited to celebrate with Him the New Pasch. S. Ambrose (*On S. Luke* xxii.) says that " he was

described without a name that, as a poor and unknown man, he might be held in esteem"; as Christ chooses, not the rich and noble, but the poor, and men of no regard, with whom to share His mysteries. But this is opposed to *S. Mark* xiv. 15 and *S. Luke* xxii. 12, where Christ says: "He will show you a large upper room," such as a poor man could not possibly possess. Christ said "furnished"—not paved with stones of tiles, but adorned with tapestry and with tables prepared for a supper, as *S. Mark* describes it.

Some Greek copies of this Gospel have *ἐστρώμενον ἔτοιμον*, "ready furnished," as if the second word were added to explain the first. Euthymius says that Christ did not mention him that Judas might not know with whom He was going to keep Pasch, and lay snares for Him. *S. Chrysostom's* opinion seems a better one (*Hom.* lxxxii.), that Christ did not name him because he was unknown, as *1 Kings* x. 3.

But this is not sufficient, because it appears from the words that follow that the man was not only known, but was also a disciple, and in some degree an intimate of Christ. "The Master saith, My time is near at hand, with thee I make My pasch with My disciples" (verse 18). This shows that the other was in some sense His disciple, and by the words, "My time is near at hand," that he was in a degree an intimate. It seems more likely, therefore, either that Christ did not mention the man by name, that He might describe him in a better manner, and thus more clearly show His Divinity: or that the man was really unknown. For if He had said, "Go to Peter," or "to Paul," there would have been nothing to distinguish him from other men; but when He said, "Behold, as you go into the city, there shall meet you a man carrying a pitcher of water" (*S. Luke* xxii. 19), He showed that He foreknew the future, and that all things were prepared by divine



counsel for His death. So that God would appear to have led the man to the fountain to draw water that he might meet the disciples, and bring them to the house in which all things were prepared for celebrating the Pasch ; so that nothing might retard the celebration of the Pasch, nor hinder the divine decree.

Maldonatus then enters at much length into what he admits to be a fruitless inquiry as to who the man may possibly have been—and he gives the opinions of several early authors on the subject ; but he confesses at the same time that nothing is or can be known as to who he actually was. He considers that most probably he was some wealthy Jew, who was a friend of Christ, and a believer in Him, but secretly, like Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus ; and he concludes by repeating that the large and well-furnished room shows him to have been no poor man nor plebeian, and that Christ calling Himself “ Master ” to him would signify that he was a disciple, and His saying, “ My time is near at hand,” that he was an intimate.

*The Master saith.*

Christ appears in this word to assert that authority which no one can resist, as if He had said, “ God says ” ; but He calls Himself the Master rather than God or Lord, as a man speaks to another man. He used the same authority when He sent His disciples to loose the foal (xxi. 3), and in this case the result showed the weight that the word “ Lord ” carried ; for as soon as the disciples used it the owners of the colt let it go (*S. Mark* xi. 6 ; *S. Luke* xix. 35).

*My time is near at hand.*

Some think that Christ in these words alludes to His intention, as said before, of keeping the Pasch before the Jews, because of the near approach of His death. This is

probable, and it confirms our idea of Christ having celebrated Pasch before the other Jews. But it is more likely that He wished to show His friendship for the man, because when about to depart from the world He desired to keep his last supper with him, and that not by invitation, but of His own mind, like one who is a most intimate friend. That He did not say, "My death," but "My time," seems to show that He was to die at that time, not without reason or by chance, nor by the force or contrivance of the Jews, but because the time of His death appointed by His Father was come: that is, "My time," "the time appointed by Me," or "that on which I have decreed to die".

*With thee I make the Pasch.*

That is, "I have decreed to make it". It is a Hebrew expression like that in *S. John* (xxi. 3), "I go a fishing," that is, "I have resolved to go". The others answer in the same way, "We also come with thee". The Latins sometimes used the same (Seneca to Serenus, *De Tranquilit. Vit.*, ii.).

*With My disciples.*

Christ seems to have added this to warn His host to prepare for the reception of thirteen persons. From this we may suppose that the man had some acquaintance with Christ, and knew that He had His disciples with Him.

Verse 20. *When it was evening.*

S. Mark says the same. They mention the evening to show that Christ celebrated the Pasch at the time appointed by the Law, which commanded that the lamb should be slaughtered between the two evenings: that is, between the sunset of the 14th and the night of the 15th, as explained on verse 2. S. Luke said to the same effect (xxii. 14), "When the hour was come," that is, when the sun had set. They who say that Christ ate the lamb before the setting

of the sun appear to commit a double error : both as they speak contrarily to the Law, which commanded the lamb to be eaten with unleavened bread between the two evenings. It was not eaten before the setting of the sun when the fifteenth day was begun, that is, the first day of Azymes. Secondly, when they make in this manner Christ to have been put to death at the same time as that at which the lamb was eaten, that is, between midday and sunset, they cause Him to have died not only not at the same hour, but not even on the same day ; for if they say that the lamb was eaten on the fourteenth day between noon and sunset, as Christ died on the fifteenth day, He did not die on the same day.

*He sat down.*

Ἀνέκειτο, *discumbibat*, properly *recumbibat*. Some have thought, from the strict meaning of the word, that it refers, not to the eating of the lamb, but of the supper, of which Christ partook afterwards ; because, although the Law did not order the Jews, in plain words, to eat it standing, as Euthymius says, yet they concluded this from the Law (*Exod. xii. 11*) : “ And thus shall ye eat it : you shall gird your loins, and you shall have shoes on your feet, holding staves in your hands, and you shall eat in haste, for it is the Passover of the Lord ”. This description allows no doubt that it could not have been eaten otherwise than standing ; or why were they to gird their loins ? why to have their shoes on their feet ? why to hold their staves in their hands ? how were they to show the haste of their departure if they were not standing ? This posture alone speaks much more clearly than all the other things together. For nothing shows more haste in a man than his not sitting even to take his necessary food. The connection of words, too, does not permit us to allow this of any other supper than that at which the lamb was eaten (verses 19, 20 ; *S. John xiii. 12*). S. Matthew, too, as if speaking of another

supper than that in which the lamb was eaten, says (verse 26): "And whilst they were at supper"; and S. Luke (xxii. 14): "And when the hour was come, He sat down, and the twelve Apostles with Him"; where it is certain that he spoke of the eating of the lamb, stating the time, because the lamb was eaten at a certain fixed time. He says, therefore, of the supper of the lamb, ἀνέπεσε, as S. Matthew here has ἀνεκείτο.

The idea of some others, of which we are informed by Theophylact and Euthymius, is still more senseless: that Christ did not eat the lamb that year, when all the Evangelists bear such open witness to the contrary. It deserves no answer.

When, therefore, the Evangelists say that Christ *recubuisse* to eat the Passover, it must not be understood that He actually either sat or reclined; for we must believe, as S. Chrysostom says, that He kept all the ceremonies of the Law most perfectly, and, above all, that of eating the Pasch standing, as the Jews of old ate it; because it was the Passover of the Lord, as He was about to pass from this world. At all dinners and suppers the ancient Jews used to recline: in the time of Christ they were most probably accustomed to sit, and though the attitude was changed, the term was still preserved. For to this day we say, in Latin, *accumbere*, at table, although we sit. The Evangelists, therefore, though they used the ordinary word, *recumbo*, would not signify that Christ really reclined, but came to the table and supped.

*With His twelve disciples.*

It may be thought that, in mentioning the number of the disciples with whom Christ ate the Paschal lamb, the Evangelist meant to show that Christ on this point also observed the Law. For the Law commanded the master of the house to eat the lamb with his whole family (*Exod.*

xii. 3, 4). But the disciples were the family of Christ. S. Chrysostom thinks the Evangelists said this to show that Judas also sat down with the twelve Apostles, and proclaimed his insolence and ingratitude. The ancient authorities differ on this. Some think that Judas was not present, either at the partaking of the New Sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ, or even at the eating of the Paschal lamb ; as S. Hilary (*On S. Matt., Can. xxx.*), who thinks that Judas went out while Christ was eating the lamb, to treat with the chief priests about His seizure and delivery.

Others think that he was present at the supper of the lamb, but not at the reception of the Sacrament. This is constantly affirmed by S. Clement Alexandria (*Constit. Apost.*, v. 16). Of this opinion also, as it seems, was S. Innocent (lib. iv. 13, *De Myster.*). The arguments are as follows :

1. S. John (xiii. 30) says that Judas, as soon as he had received the sop from Christ, went out. We must suppose that the sop was given to him by Christ before the distribution of the Sacrament ; for, as S. Luke says (xxii. 20), Christ gave His Body and Blood after He had supped, and, as S. John says (xiii. 2), "when supper was done". Judas, therefore, did not receive it.

2. Christ, speaking apparently of the Sacrament of His Blood, used the words : "I will not drink from henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I shall drink it with you new in the kingdom of My Father" (verse 29). As Judas, therefore, will not drink it hereafter in the kingdom of the Father, he had not drunk it previously.

3. It is not to be supposed that Christ did what He has forbidden us to do ; namely, to give His Body and Blood to a most wicked man who had shown no sign of repentance. As to what some say, that Judas was indeed a sinner, but not a public one, and to men of this class the

Sacrament ought not to be refused, it is a question of doubt. For Christ now discovered him, both by giving the sop, and by the words, "Thou hast said". When the Body and Blood was given, then, all the Apostles knew that Judas was the betrayer.

These arguments would be of convincing weight, had not the opposite ones defenders still more in number, and were they not more capable of proof. Some said that Judas was present both at the Paschal supper and the ordinary one, and at the reception of the Body and Blood of Christ; and that He drank the Blood, but kept the Body to show to the chief priests in derision what Christ called His Body and had given to His disciples as a great mystery. Theophylact relates this, but as it is wholly devoid of proof it needs no answer.

The ancient authors generally say that Judas was present at the whole ceremony, and took of the Body and Blood of the Lord (S. Cyprian, *Lib. de Cæn. Dom.*; S. Chrysostom, *Hom. in S. Matt.* lxxxii., and *Hom. de prod. Judæ*; S. Jerome, *in loc.*; S. Augustin, *Ep.* lxiii. and *Tractat. in Joann.*; Theodosius, *On 1 Cor.* xi.; Leo, *De Pass. Dom.*, *Serm.* vii.).

This opinion can be proved, because it is not credible that before all was finished Judas rose from the table to go to the chief priests; for he would thus have betrayed his treachery, which he greatly wished to conceal. Again, after the Eucharist had been given by Christ, S. Luke speaks of Christ as addressing Judas, who was still present (xxii. 20, 21). The words of S. John, therefore, that Judas when he had received the sop went out, must be understood to mean either that Christ immediately after the Eucharist gave the sop to point out the traitor, or the word "immediately" as used by S. John means not that very moment of time, but as short a space afterwards as possible. The former seems the more likely, because S. John appears

to speak as if to show that the receipt of the sop was the reason of Judas going out : as if he were enraged at being pointed out as the betrayer. It is less likely that when he had received the sop he should have waited, however short a time, and received the Holy Sacrament. The words of Christ—"I will not drink from henceforth of the fruit of the vine until the day when I shall drink it new with you in the kingdom of My Father"—do not necessarily imply that Judas was not then present, because, although Christ does not drink with him hereafter, He does so with others ; and this is sufficient for Him to say, "until I drink it new with you," the words "with you" referring to the Apostles as a whole.

Maldonatus then discusses the opinion of Euthymius and some others, that there were more than the Apostles present. Maldonatus decides the question in the negative—first, because the Evangelists have given the names in full, and with exactness, and secondly, because the Law commanded that the Pasch should be eaten by the members of each household, except there were not enough in number to consume the lamb, when strangers might be added. This was not the case here.

Verse 21. *One of you.*

Christ discovers the traitor *sine injuria*, by showing that He knew him, but not naming him. Many have inquired why Christ said this. According to S. Chrysostom, S. Jerome, Bede, Theophylact, and Euthymius, He did it to give Judas an opportunity of repenting, and to urge him to a change of purpose, when he saw that his designs could not be concealed. Christ also may be thought to have said it to show that He died, not against His will, nor as circumvented by craft, nor without His expectation : but knowingly, willingly, resolutely, and when, from His knowledge of the design of the traitor, He might have defeated

it, and yet would not do so. But why did Christ not name him? We may reply that it was in accordance with the loving-kindness of Christ to spare the name and reputation even of His own betrayer, and to be content with showing that He was not ignorant of His betrayer; but would not name him, because it was not necessary to His object, which was to show that He died of His own knowledge and free-will. S. Jerome answers a little otherwise, that Christ did not name Judas that He might not anger him. Origen adds that Christ spoke generally, and not particularly, that the others, struck by His words, might show themselves by their countenances to be innocent, while Judas discovered himself as the traitor.

*Verse 22. And they, being very much troubled.*

It seems strange why the Apostles who were innocent should have been troubled, as if each thought the above words spoken of himself. Nor were they only so much grieved at the great wickedness that Christ should be betrayed by His own follower, whoever he were—though no doubt this did afflict them greatly—but, as S. Matthew shows, they were sorry because each thought the saying possibly spoken of himself, and was anxious, and said, “Is it I?” Origen, S. Chrysostom, Euthymius, and Theophylact give as the cause, that even if they knew themselves innocent, yet they put more faith in the words of Christ than in their own consciences.

*Verse 23. He that dippeth.*

S. John (xiii. 24) says that it was S. Peter who suggested to him to ask Christ who the betrayer was. We must, therefore, believe that both events took place, and that the Apostles first asked, one after another, “Is it I?” and when Christ would not name the traitor, that S. Peter, who resented the insults on Christ with more vehemence than



the rest, asked S. John to enquire of Christ who it was that should betray Him. From this it follows that Christ, in these words, "He that dippeth his hand with Me in the dish, he shall betray Me," did not fully describe the traitor, but first spoke generally: "One of you"; and then when each had asked, "Lord, is it I?" He answered somewhat more explicitly, "He that dippeth," that is, one of those who dip bread in the same dish "with Me". For it is possible that, on a large table where thirteen sat at meat, there were different plates and dishes into which either three or four dipped their bread; so that Christ showed that one of these three or four, or as many as were accustomed to dip their bread in the same dish with Him, would betray Him. Lastly, when the Apostles, even by this indication, could not discover who it was, John, at the request of Peter, again asked who it was, and Christ replied (*S. John* xiii. 16): "He it is to whom I shall reach bread dipped"; but because it was spoken by Christ in the ear of John, so that the others could not understand it, Judas himself at last, lest his silence should appear to convict him, asked, like the others had done: "Rabbi, is it I?" and Christ answered: "Thou hast said" (verse 25).

When this was said, neither Judas himself nor the rest could have been ignorant as to the traitor, and probably Judas, when he saw that he was discovered, went out; for before he was discovered by his name he could dissemble, but afterwards he could not; and because it is likely that this took place as soon as he received the sop, S. John may have said that he went out "immediately". The accounts of the Evangelists seem to be thus reconciled. Origen, indeed, S. Chrysostom, S. Jerome, Euthymius, and Theophylact think that by the words, "He that dippeth with Me," Judas was personally described, and only not pointed out with the finger; for they say that he had arrived at such a pitch of shamelessness, that when the

other Apostles modestly and reverently abstained from the Master's dish, Judas alone put his hand into it. S. Chrysostom alone thinks that Judas did it not from shamelessness, but at Christ's request, that the others might know who was the traitor. This idea, however, seems untenable, because it renders it impossible to harmonise S. John with S. Matthew. For if Judas had been certainly pointed out by these words, what need was there for Peter, through John, to ask who would be the betrayer? What need that Christ should point him out by other means, when He said, "It is he to whom I shall reach bread dipped"? (*S. John* xiii. 26). For all the Apostles had heard Him say, "He that dippeth his hand with Me in the dish, he shall betray Me" (*S. Matt.* xxvi. 23); and this, as all authorities agree, was done before that was said by Christ and Judas had dipped into the dish. Thus they all knew that Judas would be the traitor if he alone dipped with Christ into the dish.

Others, on the other hand, say that these words no more than before pointed out the traitor; for they only meant, "He that dippeth with Me into the dish"; that is, one of those who sit with Me at a common table and share a common dish. All the Apostles sat together, and all dipped into the same dish, and, therefore, nothing more is meant than the saying of S. Mark: "One of you that eateth with Me shall betray Me" (xiv. 18); and S. Luke: "Behold, the hand of him that betrayeth Me is with Me on the table" (xxii. 21). Christ did not wish, therefore, to point out the betrayer, but to exaggerate the wickedness by which, when he had taken food at the same table and from the same dish, he would betray Him; as David says (*Ps.* xl. 10): "Even he in whom I trusted, who ate my bread, hath greatly supplanted me". But this does not seem to harmonise well with the words of the Evangelist, for Christ, in this case, would rather have said, "One of

these who dip their hand with Me in the dish," as He had said, "One of you is about to betray Me"; and it is not probable that, when asked by each of the disciples who it should be that would betray, He would have given no other indication of the traitor than He had already given.

Some have asked how it happened that the liquid or condiment came to be in the dish when the Law had commanded that the lamb should be eaten roasted and not boiled (*Exod.* xii. 8). This is one of their arguments who say that Christ did not eat the lamb that year : as Theophylact and Euthymius say. But it is of very little weight. For this is to be understood, not of the supper in which Christ ate the lamb, but of that which was spread after the lamb had been eaten, as will be explained on verse 26. In this roasted, boiled, and all kinds of meat and condiments might be used : leavened bread alone being forbidden, because it was the first day of the Azymes.

Verse 24. *The Son of man indeed goeth.*

Christ compares His own position to that of Judas, and prefers it. At this time Judas appeared to be in a better position than Christ. Christ was the sold : he was the seller. Christ was going to death : Judas to reward. Christ was about to be deserted even by all His disciples : Judas was to be united to the chief priests, the Scribes and elders, in favour and friendship ; and might therefore appear much more happy than Christ in the judgment of men. Christ Himself refutes this opinion, and declares that in a short time He should be in a better state than Judas. That He was to suffer and die seemed to Him neither an affliction nor a calamity, nor a thing unexpected or compulsory ; but on the contrary, one that was pleasant, laudable, duteous, voluntary : a thing undertaken with the intention of obeying the will of His Father, and fulfilling His decree and the prophecies of Himself ; as He said, "The Son of man goeth indeed as it is written of Him" (*Dan.* ix. 26).

The word "goeth" has the force of Christ's showing that He was not driven out of the world by force, but left of His own free will ; for it was not so much death as a migration, as is rightly said by Theophylact. The words : " As it is written," show that the need of His death proceeded not from man, but from the divine decree and forewarning. He compares His own end, therefore, with that of Judas, because although He appeared to be dragged to death, He was not so in reality, but He went to it. He went, indeed, less to death than to glory ; for it was from this "cause God also hath exalted Him" (*Phil.* ii. 9). Judas, on the other hand, who appeared to go to profit and the favour of men, would go to the noose; and to eternal punishment so severe that it would have been better for him if he had not been born.

Maldonatus then enters into some abstract questions of Predestination and others depending on it. The 8vo omits the whole. It may, however, be thus stated in summary.

Objection : That Judas in betraying Christ fulfilled the divine decree equally with Christ Himself, and therefore that Judas was not more guilty than Christ.

S. Chrysostom, Euthymius, Theophylact, and all Catholic teachers say in reply that it was not decreed or predestinated by God that Judas should sell Christ, but that it was foreknown and foreseen by Him that Judas would do so, and that Christ should be put to death in consequence. God did not predestinate it, but He foresaw it. He did not do it, but he permitted it. Calvin makes the necessity of things to be the divine will, and says that God not only foresaw that Judas would betray Christ, but predestinated him by this necessity to do it. If so, says Maldonatus, Judas could not commit sin.

The answer is, that God and Judas did the same act, but God did not sin, and Judas did ; because God did it with the good intention of man's recovery, and Judas from a

mind full of avarice and wickedness. But according to Calvin, God alone was the author of the act.

Or it may be said that God generated an evil mind in Judas. The mind of God that Christ should die was necessarily good ; He had no need of Judas' evil one, for He might have caused Judas to sell Christ with a good intention, as, to obey God ; or Christ might have been sold and have died with an intention neither good nor bad. The mind of Judas was of God ; the evil of it was of himself.

Another question has been asked. If it would have been better for Judas never to have been born, why did God create him ?

S. Chrysostom and Eustathius reply that Judas was not created by God such as he became afterwards. God made him good, but he afterwards made himself a traitor. So says Solomon (*Eccl.* vii. 30).

It has been asked again why, being such as he was, Christ chose him as disciple. On this see chap. x. 4. In one word, when Judas was chosen by Christ, he was not what he became afterwards ; but God in His choice of men often has regard not to their future, but to their present merits. We see this in the case of Saul. God chose him when he was yet good. He was made evil *per se*. The same may be said of Solomon.

Verse 25. *Is it I, Rabbi ?*

Judas did not put this question to Christ as one ignorant, that he might learn what in his own conscience he could not but know ; but as a crafty speculator, to try whether Christ knew him to be the future traitor, and like a shameless dissembler, that whilst the others were asking each of himself whether he were the one, he also should enquire about himself, that he might pretend that he was not. He did not do so, as it appears, of his own choice, but as com-

pelled by the example of the rest. Hence he asked last of all, and perhaps after Christ had in some way pointed him out by the words, "He that dippeth with Me in the dish, he shall betray Me"; for the Evangelist relates the former before the latter. Such, at least, is the opinion of Origen, S. Chrysostom, and Bede. These observe that Judas did not say like the rest, "Is it I, Lord?" but "Is it I, Rabbi?" as if, even when he most especially wished to dissemble his treachery, he was compelled by his pride to betray himself by addressing Christ with a less honourable title than the rest.

*Thou hast said it.*

This mode of answering was honourable, and with the least possible offence to him addressed; nor had it anything of the petulance which we are apt to show when questioned. But S. Augustin's idea that Christ's words conveyed neither assent nor denial cannot be reconciled with the ordinary forms of speech. It is supposed that Christ said this to Judas after He had given him the sop as mentioned by S. John.

Verse 26. *And whilst they were at supper.*

ἐσθιόντων δὲ αὐτῶν, *vescentibus autem illis.* Our version renders the meaning, not the words. They were at supper, because it was evening, and the food taken then is called supper. S. Mark uses the word ἐσθιόντων, "eating," and our version has "eating" and not "supping" as here. The different rendering of the same word was made, doubtless, for some good reason. S. Luke (xxii. 20) and S. Paul (1 Cor. xi. 25) say that this was done after supper. Hence the words of S. Matthew and S. Mark, ἐσθιόντων δὲ αὐτῶν, *cœnantibus, aut manducantibus illis*, are not to be understood as if Christ had done it during the supper, but immediately on its being ended, before they rose from the table, and the fragments were removed.

Three acts were therefore performed at this time, which three are generally called suppers :

1. The eating of the lamb, which some call the ceremonial supper.

2. The common and customary one ; for whilst the eating of the lamb was a matter of religion, when the people had eaten it they were not satisfied, and therefore another supper was spread that each might take sufficient.

3. That in which Christ gave them Bread and Wine, consecrated to be His Body and Blood.

It is not certain whether the first is ever called a supper. The second is called so by S. Luke, S. John, and S. Paul. The third is nowhere called a supper in Scripture ; for S. Paul speaks of the Lord's Supper, not the Eucharist, but either a supper or dinner which wealthy Christians, either before, as some think, or after taking the Eucharist, used to give to the poor, in imitation of Christ, who, before He gave His disciples His Body and Blood, took His last supper with them, as men do when they are on the eve of going away from their friends, and showed His singular love to them, as we read in *S. Luke* xxii. 15 : "With desire have I desired to eat this Pasch with you before I suffer". S. Paul blames them because the wealthy took the supper which they called the Lord's Supper, and which Christians took in imitation of Christ to practise charity among themselves, with fastidiousness and without waiting for the poor, who, when they came found nothing for them, and some were hungry and others were drunken. Hence it is plain that S. Paul speaks of this supper at which some were hungry and others drunken ; for who can believe that any man was ever made drunk by the taking of the Sacrament ? When he says, therefore, "Have you not houses to eat and to drink in ?" he clearly shows that he does not call the supper "Eucharist," which none are allowed to take at their houses in private. Lastly, when he says, "Putting to shame those

who have not" (verse 22), he shows clearly that he speaks of that supper which the poor were not able to prepare for themselves. But no one was unable to prepare the Eucharist, for which only a morsel of bread and a draught of wine were necessary. The meaning of S. Paul, therefore, is that if the wealthy are so hungry that they cannot wait for the hour of dinner or supper, they should eat at their own houses; lest, if they eat in the church, not waiting for the poor, they either anticipate the supper, or appear to despise the poor, and to break the chain of love which is seen in that feast. This is not to eat the Supper of the Lord—at least, not after the manner of Christ, who, though He was Lord, yet sat not alone, but with His twelve disciples. In the same sense, the Ancients do not call the Eucharist the Lord's Supper, but that supper which Christ took with the disciples before He gave them His Body and Blood; as S. Cyprian and S. Bernard, who call their own *conciones* held on that day, from the Supper of the Lord, but who would hold it impious to call their supper the Eucharist, like the heretics.

We, therefore, in agreement with the Scripture and ancient authors, properly call it the Eucharist, because Christ consummated it, and, as the Evangelists say, *εὐχαριστῆσαι*, gave thanks, or blessed it. Thus we follow not only the authority of Scripture and the example of our fathers, but also common sense, in calling this Sacrament the Eucharist, for the term *εὐχαριστία* and *εὐλογία*, which are the same thing, peculiarly belong to this Sacrament, as being performed with thanksgiving, or at least not without it, as we are taught by the example of Christ: the whole receiving its name from the part.

The act of Christ before the supper He performed, not as an example to us, but of necessity, because He must first fulfil the ancient Sacrament before instituting the new; that is, He must eat the Paschal lamb before He gave His



Body and Blood ; and the lamb could be eaten at no time but at supper. Then when the lamb was eaten, the ordinary supper was set, both for the sake of keeping up the custom, and also that when about to depart this life, He might take a supper with His Apostles, and thus love them to the end. The Church, therefore, is not to be blamed, but rather praised, for not following the example of Christ in that which was not done by Him for our imitation. The Church only gives the Body and Blood of the Lord to those who are abstaining from food, because in this there is much more reverence ; as *Ep. cxviii.* of S. Augustin describes, and as he thought it an apostolic tradition.

*And blessed.*

(On these words we have followed the Folio and inserted much that the 8vo omits.)

*Καὶ εὐλογήσας*, “when He had blessed”. There are at least three heretical opinions on these words :

1. That of those who read “give thanks” instead of “blessed”.

2. That Christ gave thanks, not to the bread as blessing it, but to the wine as giving it thanks (*quasi illi gratias egerit*).

3. That the blessing, or, as they say, the thanksgiving, was not a singular one peculiar to this Sacrament, but one in common use among the Jews, and as such adopted by Christ. This tends to show that the practice of blessing in this Sacrament is wrong.

They are to be answered in order.

1. *Εὐλογεῖν*, used here by S. Matthew and by S. Mark (xiv. 22) of the bread, has the same meaning as *εὐχαριστεῖν*—that is, “to give thanks”; for S. Matthew (here) and S. Mark (xiv. 22) say *εὐλογήσας* here of the bread, and in the verse following use the word *εὐχαριστήσας* of the cup ; and S. Matthew and S. Mark say *εὐλογήσας* of the

bread, S. Luke (xxii. 19), S. Paul (1 *Cor.* xi. 24) say *εὐχαριστήσας*. S. Matthew (xv. 36) uses *εὐχαριστήσας* of the seven loaves and two fishes. S. Mark (viii. 6) says *εὐχαριστήσας* of the loaves and *εὐλογήσας* of the fishes. S. Matthew (xiv. 19), S. Mark (xvi. 42), and S. Luke (vi. 11) say *εὐχαριστήσας* of the five loaves; S. John (vi. 11) *εὐχαριστήσας*. S. Paul uses the two words as meaning the same thing (1 *Cor.* xiv. 16). This may have been caused by following the Hebrew, in which the same word בָּרַךְ is used both for giving of thanks and blessing, as in *Paralip.* xxix. 20, and thus each word may be used for the other.

2. The second error is clearly refuted by S. Paul (1 *Cor.* x. 16): "The cup of blessing which we bless"—that is, consecrate by blessing. By these words it is clear that the blessing was bestowed on the subject-matter; that is, the Bread and Wine, as shown in 1 *Cor.* x. 16; *S. Luke* ix. 16; and that Christ bestowed a blessing on these loaves. And as He blessed the bread and the cup in the same manner in the Eucharist, the blessing is to be referred, not to God, but to the bread and wine. Again, in 1 *Tim.* iv. 4, 5, he says: "For every creature of God is good, and nothing to be rejected that is received with thanksgiving; for it is sanctified by the Word of God and prayer". The Word of God, therefore, the prayer, and the giving of thanks refer to the food. Again, the context of the Evangelists does not suffer us to understand it otherwise than that the bread and wine were blessed by Christ. "He took the bread, and having given thanks," &c. He took the bread, then broke it, and blessed it. S. Justin Martyr, in his *Second Apologia*, calls the Eucharist "food blessed by thanksgiving"—that is, consecrated; and S. Irenæus (iv. 34, 35) says the same; and S. Cyprian (*De Carn. Dom.*) says: "The substantial bread and the cup consecrated by solemn benediction avail to the life and salvation of the whole man". So S. Ambrose

and the poet Juvenecus say "sanctumque precatus"—that is, sanctifying by prayer.

3. The followers of Calvin err in thinking that the blessing which Christ used here was not proper and peculiar to this Sacrament, but one in common use among the Jews. They are answered thus: Whenever Christ took food He blessed it and gave thanks. What is this but that by His blessing He caused some singular and wonderful results? Christ is only mentioned three times as having blessed food: (1) *S. Matt.* (xiv. 19), *S. Mark* (vi. 41), *S. Luke* (ix. 16), when He multiplied the five loaves; (2) *S. Matt.* (xv. 36), *S. Mark* (viii. 6), when He multiplied the seven loaves; (3) in this place, when He changed the Bread into His Body, and the Wine into His Blood. For His blessing the bread at Emmaus, as related by *S. Luke* (xxiv. 30), and breaking it and giving it to the two disciples, was an act of the same kind, because, as will be shown hereafter, He even then gave His Body.

Again, as these three are commonly thought to have been suppers, why did not the Evangelist say that at the supper of the lamb, and at the ordinary one which followed it, Christ either blessed or gave thanks, and at a time when the Jews most especially did so? But when they speak of the Eucharist, they do say that Christ blessed it.

4. Why do they all relate the whole act so elaborately, as if it were a thing of the very greatest importance?

Lastly. Why do they say that He blessed both the bread and the cup separately, as *S. Matthew* and *S. Mark* do? or why do they describe the whole so exactly that we may see that Christ blessed both the bread and the cup, as *S. Luke* says (xxii. 20): "In like manner the chalice also," showing that Christ took the cup and blessed it in the same manner as that in which He had blessed the bread?

*And broke.*

It was an ancient custom among the Jews for the father

of the family, at the beginning of the supper in which the lamb was eaten, to take a loaf of the Azymes, and divide it into two parts ; one of which he concealed in a napkin, and the other He blessed thus : "Blessed art Thou, O Lord our God, King of the Universe, who bringest bread out of the earth," or thus : "Blessed art Thou, O Lord our God, King of the Universe, in the eating of unleavened bread," as some have informed us from the book of the *Hebrews* entitled בִּלְנֵי. But we cannot believe that when Christ broke or blessed the bread He meant to do nothing more than merely observe the Jewish rite, for this was to be done in the eating of the lamb according to the rites of the Jews. Christ is said to have done\* His work, not in the eating of the lamb, but in the institution of the new Sacrament ; or, if He did it in the eating of the lamb, as is indeed probable, the Evangelist passed it over as being nothing to the purpose. But they have all carefully related that He did it (*fecerit*) in the New Testament. It cannot be denied, indeed, that because Christ designed to change the eating of the lamb into the eating of His own Body, that is, the figure into the verity, He might have designed to use a similar, but not the same form of blessing. This would be more probable if the rite of breaking the unleavened bread had been introduced, not by the tradition of the Jews, but by a precept of the Law. It certainly seems that Christ did not break this bread in the same manner as they did, because all the Evangelists say that He broke it as if He had not been accustomed to break it at other times or in the same manner ; and as S. Luke says (xxiv. 35), that the two disciples recognised Him in the breaking of bread, which they could not have done if He had broken it in the same manner and with the same form as the other Jewish fathers of households did. For it is plain

\* *Fecisse-facio* = ποιέω ; to sacrifice, *facio* or *sacri-facio*.

that S. Luke states the breaking of the bread to have been the cause of the recognition. It may be said that these two disciples recognised Christ by the virtue of the reception of His Body, as if the Eucharist had opened their eyes. It may be so, but in this case it is an admitted miracle which, moreover, confirms the opinion that Christ when He gave His Body broke the bread in some peculiar manner, as it is so carefully described by the Evangelists. Some think that the bread was such as could have been easily broken by the hand. But this idea can hardly hold, because the bread was unleavened, which is much more tenacious, and the most difficult of all kinds of bread to be broken. It need not, therefore, have been broken by the hand, but may have been divided by a knife. It was a custom of the Jews to say that the bread was broken, not only when it was broken by the hand, but when it was cut by the knife ; this, even when it was not divided, but only given, for it was seldom given unless it was either broken or divided first. "Deal thy bread to the hungry" (*Isa.* lviii. 7), that is, "Divide what thou hast with the poor"; and *Lam.* (iv. 4): "The little ones have asked for bread, and there was none to break it unto them". Hence the entire performance and distribution of this Sacrament is called "the breaking of bread" (*Acts* ii. 42).

Christ, therefore, made twelve portions of the bread, and gave a portion to each ; not, as some say, to the one nearest to Him, and he to the next (*vide* verse 27).

It is uncertain whether Christ gave it into their hands or put it into their mouths—most probably the former.

1. Because Christ said, "Take ye," which would apply rather to the hand than to the mouth.

2. Because, as we shall show, He gave the cup into their hands (verse 27), and He probably gave His Body in the same manner.

3. If, in dividing the bread, He had regard to the

ancient Jewish custom, it is not likely that He would put the divided bread into their mouths.

Lastly, because it was long the custom in the Church to give the Holy Body into the hands of the faithful, as we find from Tertullian (*Lib. de Spectac. Ch. de Munere*), S. Cyril Jerusalem (*Cat. v., Myst.*), S. Augustin (*Serm. ccxxiv.*), S. Chrysostom (*De Sacerdos, iii.*), Counc. i. Toledo. The Church, with a better intention, afterwards began to give it, not into the hands, but to put it into the mouth, because there was less danger and more reverence in so doing ; as, although Christ gave His Body and Blood to those who had supped, S. Augustin praises the intention of the Church because she has abandoned that custom, and gives it only to the fasting (*Ep. cxviii.*). The heretics assail us heavily, as they think, on account of the word "breaking," and say that we do not administer the Sacrament rightly unless there are many present among whom to have it distributed, because it is called in Holy Scripture "breaking of bread" from this reason. This is an objection of pure ignorance. For, as has been before said, it was called the breaking of bread, not because it was actually broken, but because it was given ; for, in Hebrew, whoever gave bread to a poor man was said to have broken it, although only given to and received by one. If Christ had had only one disciple, He would assuredly have given His Body to him, and have been said to have broken, that is, to have given it, though He had not actually done so.

*This is My Body.*

Nothing in the Holy Scripture was ever more plainly stated than this, until heresy sought to obscure it. There are many mysteries in Holy Scripture more difficult and further removed from our understanding, which yet all men, heretics or Catholics, receive, such as those of the Trinity, the Incarnation of Christ, the resurrection of

the flesh: none of these is taught in words so plain, so perspicuous, so eloquent. For where does Scripture say openly that the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are three Persons and one Essence, as Christ here says, "This is My Body"? Where does it so distinctly and clearly say that in Christ are two natures and one only Person, as He here teaches us that He gives us His Body and Blood? Where does He so explicitly declare that we shall rise again with the same body, and not another, not a spiritual, not a similar one, as He here says that He gives us not a figure, not a spirit, not bread, not wine, not anything else than His own Body and Blood? This is more easy to be believed than the other doctrines. They are proved by fewer and less notable testimonies of Scripture than this. Why are those believed, and these rejected? Why do these heretics find figures of speech where the Arians, Marcionists, Manichæans, found none? Why do they find them here, where those found them not? When we argue upon the Trinity, the whole debate turns upon the interpretation of three words: "I and the Father are one" (*S. John* x. 30), and: "These three are one" (*1 John* v. 7). When on the Incarnation, we rest on the explanation of three other words: "The Word was made flesh" (*S. John* i. 14). When on the Resurrection, on these: "The dead shall rise again incorruptible" (*1 Cor.* xv. 52). Now, when the question is of the Eucharist, we rest on those words: "This is My Body". These four mysteries should, as it seems, always be united together in our arguments with the followers of Calvin. The objection of these modern heretics to us on the Eucharist we retort upon them on the Trinity, the Incarnation, the Resurrection of the dead, that so they may either cease their attacks upon the mystery of the Eucharist, or that their arguments may cease to be urged. The Arians, Marcionists, Manichæans, Origenists, have invented many explanations against the words cited

above to escape the true one of the Church. The followers of Luther and Calvin, as they were less able to resist that truth, have issued many perverted opinions against those three words: "This is My Body". The followers of Calvin and Zwinglius all agree that they are not a literal, but figurative expression. Some find the figure in the word "bread," some in the word "is," others in the word "Body". Thus each word separately is to be expunged.

*This*.—All the followers of Luther and Calvin say that this word "this" is put for the word "bread"; for Christ took the bread into His hands and immediately said, "This" (that is, this bread) "is My Body". Hence the former say both that the bread remains in the Sacrament, because Christ said, "This" (that is, the bread) "is My Body," and that His Body is there, because He said, "This is My Body". The followers of Calvin, on the other hand, say that the bread remains, but that the Body of Christ is not in it, because He did not say, "This is My Body," but "This" (that is, the bread) "is My Body". Hence, as the bread cannot possibly be verily the Body of Christ and remain in its true nature, it follows that it cannot possibly be the Body of Christ except figuratively; that is, it signifies the Body of Christ. Each is refuted by that one word, "this". The disciples of Luther, because if *hoc*, "this," is taken of the bread; as Christ does not say *Hic est*, but *hoc*, it follows of necessity either that the bread does not remain if it be the Body of Christ, but is transmuted into it, or the Body of Christ is not in the Sacrament if the bread remains. Such was the opinion of Berengarius, or some of his followers.

The followers of Calvin will be answered if it be shown that the word *hoc* cannot be taken of the bread. This can be shown by most plain arguments.

1. If Christ intended to say *hoc*, that is, "The bread is My Body," why did He not more clearly, in one word, say



plainly, "This bread is My Body"? for the continuity of the sentence would have required this.

2. Why, when the three Evangelists, S. Matthew, S. Mark, S. Luke, and S. Paul (1 *Cor.* xi. 24), have all given us an account of the institution of this Sacrament, and on other points frequently differ from each other in words, and when one describes the same thing more obscurely and another more clearly, why do they all on this point use the same word, *Hoc est*? Why has none of them ever, by chance or design, to explain the opinion of Calvin more clearly, said, *Hic est*, or *Hic panis est corpus meum*? It will, perhaps, be objected that S. John has explained this in his sixth chapter, verse 52: "If any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever; and the bread that I will give is My flesh for the life of the world"; and that S. Paul (1 *Cor.* x. 16, and xi. 26, 28) and S. Luke (*Acts* ii. 42) call this Sacrament the breaking of bread. It may be answered, as has often been done, that it is called bread, not because it is, but either because it was such, like the serpent into which Moses' rod was changed is called a rod (*Exod.* vii. 12). Or, because it bears the form of bread as before, as they were called tongues that sat upon the Apostles (*Acts* ii. 3); not that they were actually tongues, but that they had the appearance of such. This reply might be sufficient, though we do not seem compelled to offer any explanation at all. It must be denied again and again that, in the places cited, the word "bread" is to be taken either for bread or for the figure (*figura*) of bread, for it is called, not bread, but the Body of Christ, as is clear from S. *John* vi. 52: "The bread that I shall give is My flesh". From these words the others are to be explained. The words "which I shall give" show most plainly that Christ did not speak of bread, but of His flesh, which is called, in some more excellent sense, bread. Christ opposes Himself to Moses, and His flesh to the manna.

He also opposes His flesh which He was about to give us to eat to the five loaves with which He satisfied five thousand men, twelve baskets of fragments remaining over and above (*S. John* vi. 12, 13). When the Jews followed Christ that He might give them this bread, as He bears witness Himself (verse 26), He opposed this bread, that is, His flesh, to those loaves, but He does not call the true bread "bread," but "His Body," which the Bread was, in some better and more excellent sense. As He said to the Samaritan woman (*S. John* iv. 13, 14): "Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again, but he that shall drink of the water that I will give him shall not thirst for ever; but the water that I will give him shall become in him a fountain of living water springing up unto life everlasting". In the words "which I will give him," and in His opposing that water to the true water, He shows most plainly that He is speaking, not of actual water, but of His Grace, which the water is called in some better sense.

So far, then, from the followers of Luther and Calvin being able to derive any argument against us from these words of S. John, we may rather take them as confirming our doctrine of Transubstantiation, for Christ not only signifies that He would give better bread—that is, His Body—but that He would not give it as He had given it to those whom He had lately fed, for He opposes this bread to that. He did not give that bread; He does give this. That is not in the Eucharist. This—that is, His Flesh—is in it.

Those passages of S. Paul and S. Luke are to be understood in the same manner, as is plain both from the above words of S. John, and from the authors themselves; for when S. Paul says, "The bread which we break," he shows that he is not speaking of bread, but of the Body of Christ, which, like Christ Himself, he calls bread. For the words "which we break" are added (1 *Cor.* x. 16) to distinguish

it from true, natural bread, as the words in S. John, "which I will give," *quem ego dabo*; and when S. Paul says (1 Cor. xi. 26, 28) the words "this" and "that," they show that he is speaking, not of the actual bread, but of the Body of Christ, which he calls bread, as did Christ when He said, "He that shall drink of the water that I shall give Him," the word "which" distinguishes the grace of Christ from actual water; and S. Luke, when he says that the bread was broken, means the same thing as S. Paul did.

It may be objected that the Body of Christ was not broken, but the bread was. The Body of Christ is said to be broken when it is given, because it was called by the name of bread, and it was so foreshown by the Prophets. It is the property of bread to be broken, although the body itself is not broken literally: as the grace of Christ is not drunk, and yet Christ calls it water, and water is drunk.

3. The third argument to prove that *hoc* is not taken for, or applied to, *panis*, is drawn from the difference of genders, both in the Latin and Greek. The words *hoc* and *τοῦτο* are in the neuter gender, and bread in both is masculine, and therefore they cannot refer to bread.

The followers of Calvin say what some Catholics agree with, that the pronouns *τοῦτο* and *hoc* are not adjectives but substantives, and that there is no need, therefore, that they should agree in gender with *panis*, and that the meaning of the words is, What I give to you is My Body. But what He gave was bread. In answer:

1. The pronoun *hoc* is distinctly not to be taken of bread: but granting it to be so, still, if it were a substantive, why should we not follow the interpretation of Christ? "This which I give to you is My Body," rather than the dreams of the followers of Calvin, "This which I give you is bread". Again, granting that it is a substantive, why should we not follow the ordinary interpretation of Catholics, which is much more in agreement with a pronoun, that the

pronoun *hoc* may be taken neither for the bread nor the Body, but may only signify that which Christ was about to give, and that it may be what they call *individuum vagum*.

Though I contend, *omnibus viribus*, that it is an adjective, and can in no way be a substantive, or be taken for anything but the Body of Christ, it is beyond a doubt that the pronoun is to be taken in the same way when Christ says of the bread, "This is, My Body," and when He says of the Blood, "This is, My Blood". But when He says of the Blood, "This is, My Blood," the pronoun is referred not to the wine, but to the Blood, as is clear from S. Luke and S. Paul, who join the pronoun to the following, not to the preceding word, and say τοῦτο τὸ ποτήριον. *Ergo*, when Christ says "*Hoc est corpus meum*," the *hoc* does not go with the preceding *panis*, but with the *corpus* following; and it is not a substantive but an adjective; for as the former goes with the cup that follows, so does the latter with the *corpus* that follows; and the adjective is united with the substantive, and therefore cannot express bread, but the Body of Christ.

S. Jerome, or whoever was the author of our version, very rightly observes this; for, when speaking of the Blood, he does not say, *Hoc*, "This is My Blood," as he would have done if he had thought the word "this" was put substantively, but *hic*, rendering it as an adjective. This S. Thomas, a holy, learned, and subtle doctor and wise commentator, does not observe. He is the author of the common opinion that the pronoun *hoc* is here used as a substantive and *individuum vagum*.

This, it may be said, is tautology. For if *hoc* is taken for Body, it is the same as if Christ had said, "This Body is My Body". This argument, though false, has been held, to one's wonder, by some learned men. It is not a new saying, but a well-known and even necessary one, as dialecticians teach, that in every true proposition the subject

and predicate are taken for the same thing ; yet not every proposition is tautology proper, for tautology consists not in the "*Acceptio*" of a proposition, which they call "*The Suppositio*" : but in the signification when the subject and predicate are taken, not only for the same thing, but also signify the same thing ; and not signify it only, but signify it in the same manner. For example, to say that man is a rational animal is not tautology, but a true, correct, and well-enunciated proposition ; although subject and predicate are both taken for the same thing and have the same meaning : for they signify the same thing indeed, but not in the same manner : for man expresses the whole nature ; and rational animal the same nature, but with a distinction and *per partes*.

Should it be said that man is man, and a rational animal is a rational animal, this is senseless tautology.

In the same manner, if Christ had said, "This Body is My Body," He would have uttered tautology ; but when He said, "This is My Body," although the word "this" be taken for that Body of Christ and means the same thing, it is not tautology, but a most correct and well-known expression ; because it means the same thing, but not in the same manner. "My Body" signifies the Body distinctly and by name. "This," not by name, nor distinctly, but, so to say, mutely. As the French say, when a person so speaks of another as not to give him an appellation, but to describe him ; he has not named him, but pointed him out by his finger, which is the same thing as if he had named him. So we commonly say, "This is my brother" ; when the word "this" is taken of nothing but my brother, nor has in that place any other meaning, although not in the same manner ; for, when I call him my brother, I name him. When I say, "This is my brother," I do not name him, but (what comes to the same thing) I point him out as such. But if anyone should say, *Hoc est frater meus*, he would

offend against the laws of the Latin language, and deserve a boy's flagellation. Christ would have spoken with as little reason if He had said, *Hoc est corpus meum*; *hoc* being used as a substantive. The solecism does not indeed appear with *corpus*, because both words are neuter; but it would in *sanguis*, for no one would say, *Hoc est meus sanguis*. S. Cyprian, indeed, has so rendered it, but the passage is thought corrupt. So Scripture commonly speaks—*Hic est Filius meus. Hic sanguis novi Testamenti*—S. Matt. (iii. 17); Heb. (ix. 20), and in many other like passages.

It may be affirmed that when the Father said, *Hic est Filius meus*, the *hic* is to be taken for *homo*; as if He had said, "This man is My Son". It may be. But what would one in his senses say of this proposition, *Hic est homo*, when I point out a man? For what could the word *hic* be put, but for *homo*? It could not be put for animal, as if I said, "This animal is a man" (*Hoc animal est homo*), for the genders do not agree. How certain and clear, then, it is in this proposition, *Hic est homo*, or *Hic est panis*, that the pronoun *hic* cannot possibly be taken for anything but for *homo* and *panis*, which is put for the predicate; and any tyro in the Greek language would know that τοῦτο can be referred to nothing but the Body of Christ, for it is written thus, λαβὼν ὁ Ἰησοῦς τὸν ἄρτον καὶ εὐλογήσας ἔκλασε καὶ ἐδίδου τοῖς μαθηταῖς καὶ εἶπε, λάβετε, φάγετε· τοῦτό ἐστι τὸ σῶμά μου (*Accipiens Jesus panem, et cum benedixisset fregit et dabat discipulis, et dixit Accipite manducate hoc est corpus meum*).

All other explanations, then, of the application of the pronoun "this," whether of heretics or Catholics, are to be wholly rejected. This one alone is to be held most firmly, confirmed as it is by most certain arguments from S. Luke and S. Paul; it is also the only one which agrees with the Greek context of S. Matthew and S. Mark; is adopted by our version; and most unanswerably corroborates the

Catholic doctrine of the presence of Christ in the Eucharist.

It has been objected in the Schools that when Christ said those words, His Body was not yet in the Sacrament, and therefore could not have been referred to by the above pronoun. But the same schools give the answer. In propositions practical and efficacious, demonstrative pronouns often describe what is not yet, but what is caused to be by the word itself, and it is finite.

When God made man of the dust, He could rightly and truly say of it, taking the dust into His hand, "This is man". So Christ said, *Hoc est corpus meum*; and when from a rib God made woman, He took the rib and could say, "This is woman," though when He spoke the word "this," woman was not yet in existence. Nor would He have meant if He had so spoken that the dust was man and the rib was woman, but that the dust was changed into man and the rib into woman. So when Christ took bread and said, "This is My Body," although His Body was not yet there, yet because it was to be so in a moment, He shows it by the pronoun. Nor did He signify that the bread was His Body, but that it was changed into it.

So again, at the marriage at Cana of Galilee, where He changed the water into wine, He said, *Hoc est vinum*. The *hoc* showed not the water, but the wine. The meaning was not that the water was wine or signified wine, but that it was changed by that word into wine. This example is the more to our purpose because the Ancients have used it to prove and explain the faith of this Sacrament—*e.g.*, S. Cyril of Jerusalem (*Catech. Mystag.*, iv.).

*Is.*—It is easy from what has been now said about the word "is" to show the error of those who think that it is taken for "signifies". The verb substantive does not mean "signifies," either in Latin, Greek, or Hebrew, either in sacred or profane literature, nor is it, nor can it be, taken

so to mean. If there is any figure at all when the word is used, it lies either in the subject or predicate, not in the word "is". When we say that the lamb is the Pasch, the figure is in the word "Pasch," not in the "is," for the Pasch is not taken properly for the Passover, but for the lamb which signifies the Pasch. When, on seeing a figure of Hercules, we say, "This is Hercules," the figure is not in the word "is," but in the word "Hercules," which, as it signifies the true and living Hercules, is here put for the figure of Hercules. The word "is" always involves substance, or, as Aristotle says, the union alone of extremes, and they who give a figurative meaning to it may rightly come under the rod of the Grammarians. The Grammarians say, indeed, that there are many classes of words, simple and compound; but none of them has ever said that a figure can be found in the verb substantive, but either in the subject or predicate, or in verbs not substantive, as, the field smiles, the land luxuriates. We must look, therefore, whether the figure be in the word *corpus*, for in the other two it certainly is not.

*My Body*.—Everyone who is not blind must see that there is no figure in this word; for if there be, it is not taken for the very Body of Christ. That it is so taken is clear from the context (*S. Luke* xxii. 19)—*Hoc est corpus meum*.

1. Christ did not say, "which is given *to* you," as He must have done if He had given them a figurative Body; but, "which is given *for* you". He gave them something which could be offered in expiation of sin, which assuredly a figurative body could not; for only the true Body of Christ is given for us.

A follower of Calvin might answer that the meaning is *hoc est*: that is, it is the figure of "My Body which is given for you". Against this is the fact that no Evangelist, when speaking either of the Body or the Blood, uses the future



tense ; but all the three, and especially S. Paul, use the present, “which *is* given” ; “which *is* poured out”. If the present had been put for the future, some of them at least would have used the future ; nor can it be thought that they all used the same figure by chance.

They may say again, as some of them have said, that either the present should be taken for the future, or if it is to remain as the present, the meaning of *quod pro vobis datur* and *pro vobis funditur*, is, that it begins to be given, and begins to be poured out, because it was now the beginning of the Passion. The words of S. Paul answer this, “My Body which is broken for you” ; which could not be said of the Body of Christ on the Cross, because it is evidently a sacramental expression. The Body of Christ is said to be broken as it is in the form of bread. Out of the Sacrament it is not said to be broken. Not even on the Cross, where S. John has recorded it as a mystery that the legs of the thieves were broken but those of Christ were not (xix. 36), and it was foretold in *Exod.* xii. 46. Again, when S. Luke (xxii. 20) and S. Paul (1 *Cor.* xi. 25) speak of the chalice, they say, τοῦτο τὸ ποτήριον ἡ καινὴ διαθήκη ἐν τῷ αἵματί μου ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν ἐκχυνόμενον. *Hoc est poculum novum testamentum in meo sanguine, quod pro vobis effunditur.* I have preferred to render it thus, to prevent the ambiguity which exists in our version, in which it is not clear whether the words, *qui pro vobis effunditur*, are to be referred to the cup or the Blood. In the Greek there is no possible doubt that it is to the cup, because “the Blood” is in the dative case, ἐν τῷ αἵματι, or if expressed by a passive participle, *fusus*, in the nominative, as if our version read, “This is the cup—*fusus*, poured out—for you”. The pouring out is evidently to be referred not to the word “Blood,” but to the word “cup”. The cup is not said to be poured out, but the contents of it. This matters nothing however. It is enough for us that it is

proved most clearly that the pouring out is to be referred not to that of the Blood on the Cross, but to that in the Sacrament, for the cup is said to be poured out for us, which was not done on the Cross but in the Sacrament. The sense in which the cup, or the Blood of Christ, is said to be poured out, shall be explained hereafter.

They who refer this to the Cross miss the force and meaning of the words of Christ. Christ had taken the bread and blessed it, broken it, given it to the Apostles, saying, "This is My Body". He added, "Which is given for you". Who does not see that He commended in these words the force, value, and price of that which He gave? For He gave His own Body; not openly, but concealed in the Sacrament. The Apostles might think that they only received bread which would profit the body, and thus hold it in less value than was right. Christ declares that He was giving, not bread but His Body: and His Body because it was given by Him for a remission of their sins. He does not praise the fruit of the Cross, as that was not His subject, but the fruit of the Sacrament, which was.

It would perhaps be objected that SS. Matthew and Mark, when they speak of the cup, do not say, "Which shall be poured out for you," but "for many," as if Christ addressed His words not to the Apostles alone, but either to all or to many others, so that He could not be speaking of the fruit of the Eucharist alone, but rather made allusion to the Cross. The objection will be answered when it is shown that the words, "for many," have the same meaning as "for you," as S. Luke and S. Paul have said. For the Apostles themselves who were present were many, but because Judas was present, and the Body and Blood would profit him nothing, Christ Himself, or more probably the Evangelists SS. Matthew and Mark, to show this, did not say "for you," lest they should include all, but "for many," that an exception might be understood.

Again, as all the Evangelists say of the Body, "This is My Body," so S. Luke and S. Paul say of the chalice, "This is the chalice". These two cannot be thought to speak figuratively in the use of the word chalice, and, therefore, in the Evangelists and S. Paul the word "Body" cannot be so received. And that the word "chalice" cannot be understood figuratively is most clear from what has been said before. For it is said to be poured out, so that it is a true chalice, but as Christ says, *Hic est calix in meo sanguine*, which is the same as if He had said, *Hic est calix sanguinis mei*, "This the chalice of My Blood," it is the same as S. Luke and S. Paul say, *Hic est calix in sanguine meo*, and as SS. Matthew and Mark, *Hic est sanguis meus*.

The followers of Calvin insist that as the word *calix* here used is figurative, so the words *hoc est corpus meum* are figurative also. But the contrary is the truth. The word *calix* is not figurative, and therefore the words *hoc est corpus meum* are not figurative. Let them show where the figure is. Is it in the word *est*? The figure, as has been proved, cannot be in that word, and therefore it must be in the word *calix*. *Calix*, therefore, is not put for a true chalice, but for the figure of a chalice; as, they say, *corpus* is not taken for a true body, but for the figure of a body. This is senseless—Christ gave a true chalice. They reply that *calix* is to be taken figuratively because it was put for *sanguis*—this is still more senseless.

1. Because it would be the same as if Christ had said, "This chalice," that is, "My blood" as they explain it, "is My Testament in My Blood"—what could be more senseless?

2. Again, if there is any figure in the word *calix*, it would be the same as that which, they say, is in the word *corpus*. But in *corpus* they say that the figure is that the word *corpus* is put for the figure of *corpus*; *ergo*, if there is any figure in *calix*, it is that the word *calix* is put for the figure of the *calix*.

Finally, if there is a figure in the *calix*, there is certainly none in the *sanguis*; for what could be more senseless than to say, "This is the chalice of My Blood"? that is, "the figure of the chalice which is the figure of My Blood". To this result, however, in their opinion, the words of our Lord must necessarily be reduced. Again, if there were a figure, it would be that which they assert to be in the words on which they lay so much stress: *Petra erat Christus*. Here there is no figure at all, or it is not in the *Christus*, but in the word *petra*; for the meaning is not that the rock is a figure of Christ, but that it is Christ; for the words are transposed—"the rock is Christ" being put for "Christ is the rock" (*petra erat Christus*, for *Christus erat petra*)—and thus *petra* is not the subject but the predicate, as is clear from the context (1 Cor. x. 4); for it was not the actual rock that followed them, but Christ; the rock remained immovable. Christ went before them and gave them food and drink: that is, "They drank of the rock," *i.e.*, Christ was the rock of which they drank and which followed them. The reason of the transposition of words is that the Hebrews repeat the last word at the beginning of the next; as, "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth, and the earth," &c. (*Gen.* i. 1); and, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word," &c. So, because he had said, "They drank of the rock," S. Paul repeated the word "rock," "And the rock was Christ".

If there is any figure, therefore, it is not in the word "Christ," which is put for the true Christ, and not for His figure; but in the word "rock," because Christ is not literally a rock, as He is not literally a vine, or a lion; but by comparison, because he is the foundation of the Church. The followers of Calvin say that the words *Hoc est* mean that it is a figure of the Body. If so, Christ would be the figure of the rock—which is senseless.

It cannot be doubted that the word "Body" is to be

taken here in the same sense as the word "Flesh" in *S. John* (vi. 51). *Panis . . . caro mea*, for that which He promised there, He gives here ; as the word *panis* shows ; for it is not taken for the Body of Christ, unless as far as it is given under the form of bread. Their denial that that chapter of *S. John* refers to the Sacrament, refuted as it has been by so many men of learning, needs no answer here ; and they object themselves to us that Christ said, "The flesh profiteth nothing" (verse 64), as if He were speaking of the Sacrament. The word "flesh" cannot be taken there except for the true flesh ; for the figure is not in the word *caro*, but *panis*, for Christ does not call His flesh bread, but bread His flesh ; as if He had said, "That bread is My flesh which I shall give you". For He opposes that bread to the true natural bread ; and when He said, *Hoc est corpus meum*, there was no figure in the word Body, but it showed the true Body of Christ.

And even if Christ had said, "My Body is this bread," as these think, in meaning at least, if not in words, we could not explain it as they do. - "This bread is the figure of My Body," but "This bread is My true Body" ; not, however, that it is true bread, for it is true flesh, but not true bread.

If these words were spoken by Christ in figure, it is very wonderful that none of the Evangelists, nor S. Paul, who all describe the same institution of this Sacrament, explain it to be a figure ; most especially as they knew that, just before, the people of Capernaum had been offended by a like expression (*S. John* vi. 60), and the Evangelists take pains to explain even in matters of much less importance than this, whatever is said in figure, or obscurely, by themselves or others. Thus Christ had said, "Destroy this Temple," &c. He called His Body the Temple, by figure, but yet S. John explained : "He spoke of the Temple of His Body" (ii. 21). He had said, "If I be lifted up from the earth, I will draw all things to Myself" (xii. 32). There

is no figure here, but only obscurity. He explains it (verse 33): "Now this He said signifying what death He should die". He said (*S. Matt.* xvi. 6): "Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees," which was spoken obscurely and in figure, Christ Himself explained it (verses 11, 12). He had said (*S. John* xv. 1): "I am the true vine"; He explained His words immediately after (verse 4). S. Paul had called the Church "the Body of Christ" (*Coloss.* i. 24). The figure is in the word "Body," for it was not taken for the actual and natural Body of Christ, for He immediately added, "which is the Church". Who can believe that, if there had been a like figure in the word "Body," none of the Evangelists, or S. Paul alone, either by chance or design, would have explained it?

Especially when Christ said that He would give the Apostles His Body, and they used to doubt in matters much more plain, whether He spoke obscurely or in figure—why, then, did none of them doubt about this saying? and if in figure, why did none of them ask Him what was His meaning? They doubted about the parable of the Sower and the Seed, and Christ explained it to them (*S. Matt.* xiii. 3) even when they did not ask Him (verse 18). They doubted about the parable of the Tares. They asked and received an explanation. Surely, if Christ had spoken obscurely and had not explained His words, He would have left the Apostles doubtful and exposed to many errors, especially as these were His last words, which, as such, should have been as clear as possible; for what wise testator declares his last will in doubtful or figurative terms? S. Paul also is most clear in his account (*1 Cor.* xi. 27): "Whosoever shall eat this bread, or drink the chalice of the Lord unworthily, shall be guilty of the Body and Blood of the Lord". Why would they have been guilty if they had not received the true Body and the true Blood? The followers of Calvin reply that they would

have been guilty because, though they did not receive it in reality, they did receive it in figure, and they dishonoured this ; or, in the figure of the Body and Blood of Christ they dishonour the Body and Blood, and treat it without reverence and respect.

We may, perhaps, say what they cannot, as they think that no reverence is to be paid to Sacraments, and deride us for saying that the same honour is to be paid to images and to the things signified by them. Their example, too, is not to the point. If anyone, they say, throw the royal signet upon the ground or break it, he is guilty of lese-majesty. They take for granted what they ought to prove—that the Sacraments are signs. This has been answered again and again. Let them take an example in the image of the king. If a man misconduct himself to it is he guilty of lese-majesty? Surely not, or they must grant what they deny so obstinately, that honour is due even to the images of the things signified. S. Paul gives the reason why they who eat and drink unworthily are guilty of the Body and Blood of the Lord (1 *Cor.* xi. 29). They receive it with no other respect than ordinary bread : he spoke, therefore, of the true Body and Blood of Christ.

Moreover, we find in Scripture that the Body of Christ is spoken of in three ways only :

1. Properly, for the natural and true Body.
2. Metaphorically, for the Church (*Coloss.* i. 24).
3. For the Gospel, or the truth answering to the ancient figures (*Coloss.* ii. 16, 17).

More senses in which to receive it we do not find. And as in this passage it is taken neither for the Church nor for the Gospel, the use of Scripture shows us that it is to be taken here for the true and natural Body of Christ. In short, if Christ had intended to say that He gave His true Body and Blood, could He have spoken more clearly, more explicitly, more distinctly than He did? “This is My

Body," "This is My Blood"—why, then, should we seek to obscure by figures what is said most plainly, that so we may not be compelled to believe? Calvin argues against other heretics like himself who said that Christ gave only a figure: "If a person could neither deceive nor lie, it would follow that whatever he signifies he will in fact fulfil and make good. It is the necessary result, therefore, that in the Supper of the Lord we truly receive the Body and Blood of Christ" (*Institutes*, iv. 17). And in his *Commentary*: "The Lord would command us to eat bread, declaring it to be His Body, to no purpose, unless the result truly followed the figure. For although we there discern nothing but bread, He does not deceive or delude us in giving our souls the nourishment of His flesh; not, therefore, in sign alone is shown the partaking of the flesh of Christ, but in actual fact." Calvin, I say, argues against the followers of Zwinglius that, because Christ cannot lie or deceive or delude, He gives us not merely a figure, but His very Body and Blood. From this argument of his we reply against him: "Christ cannot lie nor deceive nor delude. Therefore, when He said, 'Take ye and eat, this is My Body' (verse 26), He gave not only a Sacrament, but also His very, true Body; and as He did not say, 'This will be My Body when you eat it,' but 'This is,' it follows that under the Sacrament which He gave, He gave His own Body."

We have said that this mystery is not to be separated from those others of the Trinity, the Incarnation, and the Resurrection. It shall now be shown that we believe these by the same right, or, if possible, a still better one, than the followers of Calvin believe the above; and we explain them without any figure. In this present point, as has been said, they can find no figures. In those other mysteries the ancient heretics found them, and sought to prove them from Scripture. "I and the Father are one" (*S. John* x. 30)



the followers of Arius explained to mean one, not in nature and essence, but in concord and consent of will, and they set about to prove it by Scripture—*e.g.*, *Acts* iv. 32.; *S. John* xvii. 21. What could the followers of Calvin produce with so much semblance of truth from Scripture in support of their doctrine of a figurative presence? The followers of Marcion and Manes explained the words, "The Word was made flesh" (*S. John* i. 14), by a figure—that is, Christ took the similitude of flesh—and they even seemed to prove it by *Rom.* viii. 3; *Philipp.* ii. 6, 7. What triumphs would not the Calvinists have boasted against us, what clamour would they not have raised, if they had found any passage in Holy Scripture in which Christ is said to have given the form and similitude of His Body for us!

The followers of Origen, again, understood that the dead would rise in figure: not in the same flesh, but they would put on other flesh, not true flesh, not corporeal flesh, but heavenly and spiritual. *1 Cor.* xv. 44 forms their ground of proof. The words of Job (xiv. 12) seem expressly to deny any future resurrection, and *Psalms* lxxvii. 39 and xlviii. 13 were alleged by them to the same end. What would the followers of Calvin do if they could produce any testimony from Scripture in which the Body of Christ was said not to be given to us, as it appears to be said in the above passages that the dead do not rise? To the assertions of those ancient heretics the Catholics of their day rightly replied. Rightly indeed, but we confute more rightly and easily all the testimonies which the followers of Calvin may bring to prove their doctrine of a figure.

Lastly, it is unaccountable that this idea never occurred to any one after the Apostles, except to Berengarius and, perhaps, Bertram, and that it was received by none, but at once condemned by the whole Church.

We follow the testimony of the ancient Fathers, from whom we will produce a few of their innumerable passages in our support.

Maldonatus gives some pages of citations from the primitive Fathers. He names S. Justin Martyr (*Apol.* ii.) as teaching that the bread and wine are changed into our body and blood when we eat and drink them.

S. Cyprian (*De Cæna Dom.*, lib. ii.) teaches that the bread was changed not *in effigie* but in nature, and made by Omnipotent power "the flesh of the Word".

S. Cyril of Jerusalem (*Cat. Mystag.*, iv.).

Eusebius of Emissa (*Hom.* v. *de Pasch.*).

S. Hilary (*De Trinit.*, viii.).

S. Chrysostom (*Hom.* lxxxiii. *in loc.*). "His words," he says, "are so clear that they can be obscured by no explanation," yet some of the heretics have produced the following words of his on this passage of S. Matthew as if he could be claimed as of their opinion. "Christ," he says, "gave us nothing as an object of sense, but by means which were such; all the things which He gave us are in fact insensate." Hence they infer that, in the opinion of S. Chrysostom, the Body of Christ is taken by us only spiritually. But they should have observed what follows. "As, then, Christ says, 'This is My Body,' we need be under no doubt, but may believe and see with the eyes of our mind; for nothing that is the object of sense has been given to us by Christ; that is, nothing that is to be judged of by sense, but all is to be comprehended by the eyes of the mind and by faith." S. Chrysostom, therefore, holds that the Body of Christ is not to be judged of by sense.

S. Ambrose (*De Myst. Init.*, 9, and *De Sact.*, iv. 5).

S. Gregory Naz. (*Orat.* ii. *in Pasch.*).

S. Gregory Nyss. (*Orat. Catech.*, chap. xxxvii.).

S. Leo (*Serm.* vi. *de Jejun. Sept. Mens.*).

S. Cyril Alexand. (*Comment. on S. John* x. 13).

There is no need of lengthy extracts, but the reader may see that we neither believe nor explain Scripture otherwise than all the most ancient authors.

The followers of Calvin object the words of S. John (vi. 64), "It is the Spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing" (*vid. loc.*).

2. They argue from the passages in which the Sacrament, even after consecration, is called bread ; but they have been answered by us above.

3. They derive another argument from the word "chalice". This has also been answered, and shall be more fully hereafter. Christ plainly and explicitly said, "This is My Blood".

One passage yet remains (1 Cor. x. 3, 4): "And did all eat the same spiritual food, and all drank the same spiritual drink". From this they infer that we eat the flesh of Christ and drink His Blood only in a spiritual sense. But it is evident that in these words S. Paul means that the ancient Hebrews did not eat the same spiritual food as we, but the same *ipsos inter se*. He does not compare them with us. This is plain from the end of the preceding chapter (ix. 26, 29), and the beginning of the one following (x. 1-5). "I so fight not as one beating the air." This is the proposition which he confirms in chap. x. 1: "I would not have you ignorant that our fathers were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea. And all in Moses were baptised in the cloud and in the sea, and did all eat the same spiritual meat, and all drank the same spiritual drink ; and they drank of the spiritual rock that followed them : and the rock was Christ. But with the most of them God was not well pleased : for they were overthrown in the desert." His meaning was : "As our fathers, although they had the same Sacraments and were partakers of the same blessings from God, were not all saved, but many perished in the desert : so I, although I have the same Sacraments as you, ought not to be secure, but fearful, as the Wise Man said (*Prov.* xxviii. 14) : lest, perhaps, when I have preached to others I myself should become a castaway".

This is clear from the beginning of the chapter (1 *Cor.* x. 1). When S. Paul wrote this, he did not compare them to us, who were never under the cloud, but under the sun of justice, but he compares them to one another. When he said, therefore, "They did all eat the same spiritual meat, and all drank the same spiritual drink," and especially when he added, "but with the most of them God was not well pleased," he shows plainly that he had previously compared them, not to us, but to one another. His argument would otherwise have been without point, for he could not have said, "They ate the same spiritual meat as we, and yet with most of them God was not well pleased". It is, therefore, possible that we too may not please God.

Nor does S. Paul argue against Christ. Christ compared the bread, that is, His flesh, with the manna which the ancient Jews ate; and He said, "Your fathers did eat manna in the desert and are dead. This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that if any man eat of it he may not die." S. Paul adds, "Now these things were done in a figure of us, that we should not covet evil things as they also coveted" (1 *Cor.* x. 6). He applies to us what he had said before of the Jews. He was speaking, therefore, of the Jews alone.

In return, I reply—Scripture calls the food which the Hebrews ate spiritual food, and the drink which they drank spiritual drink, to distinguish them from ours. He nowhere calls our food and our drink spiritual. Theirs, therefore, was taken only spiritually, ours truly and in fact.

These are all the Scripture passages which the heretics abuse, or which have any appearance of probability. Every ordinary reader can judge of their value. They offer many other reasons which should rather be answered, if at all, in the schools than in a commentary, which should savour of nothing but Scripture. It should be enough for us to answer, in one word, that we are Christians, not philosophers. The

Word of God is our stay ; and while we have this clear and plain, we lay little stress on the dictates of mere natural reason.

One argument more of theirs, which they think most especially theological, shall alone be noticed. They say that the words, "This is My Body," are clearly sacramental, and are, therefore, to be understood sacramentally. It may be answered—(1) If the words *sacramentalis locutio* mean that the Body and Blood of Christ were given to us, not really, not truly, not substantially, as Calvin says, but only in mystery, according to Zwinglius: then, to speak briefly, they are ignorant of the meaning of these terms. They take them to mean that by which an outward sign is asserted, and the thing signified is excluded. This is their first principle. If it is a Sacrament of the Body of Christ, the Body itself is not present ; for they think that the presence of the thing signified is opposed to the sign. But Scripture shows otherwise. The Ark of the Old Testament was a sign, and, as it were, a Sacrament, by which the Divine Majesty was signified ; but even in their opinion the Divine Majesty was present. The dove in which the Holy Ghost descended on Christ was undoubtedly a sign of the same Holy Ghost, and, as it were, a Sacrament : none deny that the Holy Ghost was present.

The tongues of fire which descended on the Apostles (*Acts* ii. 3) were a sign of the Holy Ghost, and they signified that the Holy Ghost, through the Apostles, would speak in various languages ; and the Holy Ghost was not absent from them. Let them learn, then, that the words, "This is My Body," although concerned with the Sacrament, are not a sacramental expression. They err greatly in thinking that whatever is said of a Sacrament is said *sacramentaliter*. For when we say of the Water of Baptism, "This is water," we do not speak sacramentally, but truly and properly. In the same way, when Christ said, "This is My Body," it would be a sacramental expression, if the water

were termed Regeneration, and the Body of Christ were termed "bread," and were said to be broken and torn by the teeth, as S. Chrysostom says. For these cannot be understood but sacramentally (*sacramento tenus*), because the Body of Christ is not properly broken, but the Sacrament.

Verse 27. *And taking the chalice, He gave thanks.*

On the giving of thanks—*εὐχαρίστια*—*vide* the preceding verse. It need only be observed here that Christ blessed the chalice and the bread separately; for all the Evangelists especially say so, or at least indicate it, as when S. Luke (xxii. 20) or S. Paul (1 *Cor.* xi. 25) say: "In like manner also the chalice after He had supped, saying, This chalice is the New Testament in My Blood: this do ye as often as ye shall drink for the commemoration of Me". When S. Paul says, "In like manner," it is the same as if he had said, "In like manner He took" and "In like manner He blessed".

*Drink ye all of this.*

Our enemies charge us with breaking the express commandment of God in defrauding the people of one kind of the Sacrament, for Christ intentionally, as if foreseeing our error, said of the Blood what He had not said of his Body, "Drink ye all of this". Why, then, do they not give the Blood of Christ to infants, especially when they baptise them, and as they think this Sacrament more necessary than baptism, saying that the only proof of the necessity of baptism is in *S. John* iii. 5, and this they deny to apply to baptism?

Why do they not give the Blood of Christ to the excommunicated, if Christ willed all to receive it? In fact, Christ did not say, "Drink ye all," when He gave the chalice, as He had not done it when He gave His Body, as if He wished to commend His Blood to them rather than His

Body ; but because He gave His Body to each singly, one after another, but the chalice not to each, but to the one nearest to Him, who again gave it to the next to him, and so on. Because, therefore, He gave the cup to one only, that He might not appear to desire that that one alone should drink it, He said, "Drink ye all," or, as S. Luke explains it (xxii. 17) more clearly, "Divide it among you"; though this has not been previously observed, especially in our time, when this saying has brought incredible troubles to many. S. Luke mentions the chalice twice. First, he says Christ took the chalice and gave thanks and said, "Take and divide"; but he does not say that Christ said, "This is the chalice in My Blood". Again, in verse 20: "In like manner the chalice too after He had supped, saying, This is the chalice, the New Testament in My Blood". Thus S. Jerome, whom most Moderns follow, thinks that there were two chalices. I rather agree with S. Augustin (*De Consens.*, iii. 1) and Euthymius (*in loc.*), that there was only one, which S. Luke, not keeping to the order of events, has mentioned twice—(1st) by anticipation, and (2ndly) in its proper place.

Verse 28. *This is My Blood.*

For information on this subject, see verse 27.

#### *Of the New Testament.*

Τὸ τῆς καινῆς διαθήκης, *Sanguis Novi Testamenti*. Διαθήκη properly means a disposal of property. It applies therefore to every *fidus* (treaty), one kind of which is the attestation of the last will; but it is most commonly used of the testament in which the will itself is stated, as the word *dispono* is found in our version (*Isa.* xxxviii. 1): *Dispone domui tuæ*, "Take order with thy house". The Hebrew is בְּרִית which carries the same meaning. S. Paul (*Heb.* ix. 16, 17) uses διαθήκη for a will as applied to both Old and New Testaments. The followers of

Luther and Calvin therefore err in calling the Old and New Testament *fœdus* and not *Testamentum*. S. Mark uses the same word as S. Matthew: *Hic is sanguis meus Novi Testamenti*; S. Luke, however, says, τοῦτο τὸ ποτήριον ἡ καλὴ διαθήκη ἐν τῷ αἵματι μου, *Hic est calix Novum Testamentum in meo sanguine* (xxii. 20); S. Paul, *Hic calix Novum Testamentum est in meo sanguine* (I Cor. xi. 25). From this difference the heretics have inferred that as Christ said both *Hic est calix* and *Hic calix est Novum Testamentum*, each must be taken figuratively. Enough has been said on verse 26 about the figurativeness of the chalice. We will now speak of the meaning of the other figure and of the whole passage. This need not take many words. *Nego*, I deny that Christ said these words. For, as S. Matthew who was present, and S. Mark who learned from him, say that Christ gave His Blood with the words, "This is My Blood of the New Testament": and as He could not say both "This is My Blood of the New Testament," as S. Matthew and S. Mark say, and "This is the chalice the New Testament in My Blood," as S. Luke and S. Paul say, it may be thought that He used the words of S. Matthew and S. Mark, rather than those of S. Luke and S. Paul. Again, the words of S. Matthew and S. Mark better express what Christ did—the giving of His Body and Blood. The words *Novum Testamentum* would appear to have been added in passing and by way of explanation, as appears from S. Matthew and S. Mark. S. Luke and S. Paul would appear to speak as if the first object of S. Paul had been to declare that He gave the New Testament rather than His Blood. It may be thought, therefore, that He used the words of S. Matthew and S. Mark rather than those of S. Luke and S. Paul. Still, the meaning would not be what these make it, nor would it lend any support to their view. For if Christ said, "This is the chalice the New Testament in My Blood," as the words of S. Luke



are to be rendered, He simply used a Hebraism—for “in my blood” has the same meaning in Hebrew as “of my blood”—as S. Matthew and S. Mark have expressed without a Hebraism. As, then, *calix in meo sanguine* and *sanguinis mei* bear the same meaning, let us suppose that Christ said the latter. The meaning is simply: This is the chalice of my blood; and there is no more of a figure than if we should say, “This is a cask of wine” or “a vessel of water”. Let us see if there is any figure in the word *Testamentum*. They who reduce everything to figure say that there is, because the New Testament is called a chalice. I, who seek not figure but truth, find none here. We see that in all languages the word *fœdus* has many significations—both the subject-matter and the symbol by which it is ratified, as the slaughter of a pig among the ancient Romans was a *fœdus*, and it was so called by them without any figure. Thus the Old Testament was so called without figure, because God performed it on the one part and the Hebrews on the other; and the divine promise itself was frequently spoken of as a *pactum* or covenant, as 4 *Kings* xiii. 23; and the blood by which, as an external symbol of ratification, it was entered upon and without any figure, for the word signifies all these things. In S. *Luke* the sentence is without a verb, and it is doubtful where it should be supplied. “The chalice,” Christ says, “the New Testament in My Blood.” The verb “is” could be inserted in two places: either after the word “This”—“This is the chalice”—so that the chalice by apposition might be termed the New Testament, or it may be read after “chalice”—“This chalice is the New Testament in My Blood”. It ought to be placed immediately after “This,” for as S. Matthew and S. Mark, as has been said, give not only the meaning, but the actual words of Christ, from them the text of S. Luke and S. Paul is not only to be understood, but even constructed. Besides, as has been said, it was not the intention of Christ to give the New Testament, but His Blood.

We cannot think, therefore, that He meant "This chalice is the New Testament," but "This is the chalice of My Blood," which chalice is the New Testament. Hence the words of S. Paul, although transposed, are to be reduced to this model: "This chalice the New Testament"—that is, "This chalice is the New Testament".

In brief, it may be doubted why S. Luke and S. Paul did not say, "This chalice is the New Testament of My Blood," or, more clearly, "This is the chalice of My Blood, the New Testament". The reply may be, that it is a Hebraism: *In meo sanguine* meaning *per meum sanguinem*. They used this expression because they called the New Testament a chalice, and it is better called the New Testament, *per sanguinem*, or, what is the same thing, *in sanguine*, than *sanguinis*. The meaning is the same as that expressed in the plainest terms by S. Matthew and S. Mark, "This is My Blood of the New Testament".

It is worth enquiring why Christ called it His Blood of the New Testament. It was the custom of almost all nations to ratify treaties by the blood of victims. Sometimes, when about to enter upon an unusually sacred and inviolable engagement, they mutually drank blood drawn from their own veins (Sallust, *Bell. Catil.*). The same thing has been done in our own times. Christ did this when He gave the Apostles His own Blood to drink—that is, He ratified a treaty; for the twelve Apostles who were present represented the whole Church with which He made it. He, therefore, desired to express this in words.

Christ alludes also to the institution of the Old Testament, which was dedicated by the blood of a heifer (*Exod.* xxiv. 8). He seems to allude to the words of Moses when he took the blood and sprinkled it upon the people and said, "This is the blood of the Covenant which the Lord hath made with you". Christ opposes Himself to Moses: His own Blood to the blood of the heifer: the Apostles to

the people of the Jews: sprinkling to sprinkling: and testament to testament. Moses sprinkled the people outwardly by the blood of the heifer: Christ sprinkled the Apostles inwardly by His own Blood. Hence, perhaps, the force of the word ἐκχυνόμενον, which is poured out, that is, "sprinkled". Christ calls the new *pactum* the New Testament, which He confirmed not with the Jewish people alone, as before, but with all the nations which received the Gospel, "that whosoever believeth in Him may not perish, but may have life everlasting". Christ alludes, therefore, to that new treaty which God had often promised through His prophets; and herein, perhaps, lies the force of the Greek article in *S. Matthew* and *S. Mark*, τὸ αἷμα; that is, the Blood of that New Testament which has been often promised, and of which you have often heard. Hence we see why, when Christ spoke of His body, He made no mention of the New Testament, but when He spoke of His Blood He did make it. Because treaties are ratified by blood: not, as Origen thinks, that we are redeemed by His Blood, but by His Flesh.

From this it is seen that Christ made the *Testamentum* there and not on the Cross, as modern heretics contend; for the meaning is not, "This is the Blood by which the New Testament will be ratified": but "by which it is ratified now". When a treaty is entered upon, the parties must be present to exchange words and give symbols. Nothing of this kind was done on the Cross. Christ had been deserted and, as it were, put to death when He spoke with His Mother and S. John and no other; and He spoke of personal subjects alone and not of any public treaty. He did all that was necessary for the performance of a treaty when He met the Apostles, that is, the whole Church, at a feast, at which treaties are celebrated, and gave them His own Blood, by which, as by a symbol, treaties are ratified, and He declared that He entered upon a treaty with the Church.

“This is My Blood of the New Testament.” Here, then, was instituted the New Testament. Here, too, Christ offered that sacrifice without which there can be no treaties. When, therefore, He gave His Blood to the Apostles and said, “This is My Blood of the New Testament,” He put them in possession of a New Covenant. The conclusion is, that Christ gave His very Blood. For He opposes His own Blood to the blood of the heifer, as the truth is opposed to the figure.

*Which for many.*

S. Mark uses the same words ; but S. Luke and S. Paul say, “for you”. It is not probable that Christ used both expressions, as His words were directed to those who were present, but which of the two He did use does not appear. If guided by conjecture, we might rather think that He said, “for you,” than “for many”.

1. Because He was speaking to the Apostles alone.
2. Because, as said above, He was commending a duty to them, and He desired to explain to them the good which His Blood-shedding would do them. Hence the words of S. Luke and S. Paul are to be explained by those of S. Matthew and S. Mark, that the meaning of both may be the same ; not as Euthymius and Theophylact think, that “for many” is the same as “for all”. Calvin follows these, if, indeed, he knew them, but *perverso animo* ; for he says that Christ did not die for all men, but only for the predestinate. The meaning of “for many” is not “for the predestinate,” as many, even Catholics, assert ; nay, Christ signifies that His Blood was not shed even for all who were present, for the words *pro multis* are of less extent than *pro vobis* ; for it is the same as if He had said, “This is shed for you” : that is, for the most of you, and He, therefore, opposes “many” to “all” who were present. When Christ said those words, therefore, it is

certain that He did not include Judas, for whom His Blood, as to its effects and fruit, was not shed. S. Matthew and S. Mark, to explain this, relate, with great wisdom, not the words but the meaning, *Qui pro multis effundetur*.

The objection may be raised that the Church thinks that Christ said both *pro vobis* and *pro multis*. In reply, the Church defines nothing ; but when some Evangelists have said, "for many," and others, *pro vobis*, to avoid error on a matter of doubt she unites the two.

*Shall be shed.*

Which is shed. We have spoken of the force of the present tense on verse 26, showing that it cannot apply to the Cross. We must see here in what sense Christ says that His Blood would then be poured out. We may take the meaning to be that it was poured out to be drunk ; for we say at table to the attendant, when we wish for wine, *funde vinum*, "pour out the wine". Christ may have alluded to the words of Moses (*Exod.* xxiv. 8), "He took the Blood and sprinkled it upon the people, and he said, This is the blood of the Covenant which the Lord hath made with you concerning all these words". The word "chalice" would support this view, a chalice being a vessel most especially used for drinking from. We cannot think of any other reason why S. Luke and S. Paul use the word "chalice," which, as said before, Christ did not use, unless to signify to what end His Blood was poured out, namely, that the Apostles might drink it : for we drink from a chalice.

Their opinion is better who explain it to mean, "It is shed," that is, "sacrificed".

1. Because Christ does not say, "It is shed to you" (*vobis*), as He would have done had it been poured out for them to drink ; but He said, "which is poured out for you" (*pro vobis*). This agrees with a sacrifice, for sacrifices are not offered to men, but for them.

2. Christ when offering His Body said, "This is," &c., and no other reason can be imagined why S. Matthew and S. Mark said that of the Blood alone, except they thought that it would be sufficient to show the nature of a sacrifice, if they spoke only of the Blood, in which the virtue of a sacrifice chiefly consists.

3. Christ spoke in the same sense of His Body, "which is given for you," and of the Blood, "which is shed for you". But when He spoke of His Body, the meaning could not have been, "which is given to you to eat," but "which is sacrificed for you". The same of the Blood, "which is shed for you". It will be said that the word "chalice," which S. Luke and S. Paul use, is adverse to this idea, for they say that the chalice and not the Blood is poured out, and a chalice is not poured out for sacrifice, but for drinking from. Other nations sacrificed the blood of their victims when they had collected it into cups. Virgil describes this (*Æneid*, vi., line 248); and Moses himself, whose figure Christ here fulfils, received the blood of the heifers doubtless in a cup and sprinkled the people with it.

Verse 29. *I will not drink from henceforth.*

Οὐ μὴ πῖω ἀπ' ἄρτι ἐκ τούτου τοῦ γεννήματος τῆς ἀμπέλου, *de hac generatione aut de hoc fructu vitis*. The ancient translator, to express the sense of the Greek, used a word not commonly employed by the Latins. Without doubt, the expression *genimen vitis* is a periphrasis for the vine itself, though rarely found in Scripture. Its use by Christ in Scripture shall be explained hereafter.

Scripture uses another periphrasis in the same sense, calling wine "the blood of the vine" (*Gen.* xlix. 11; *Deut.* xxxii. 14). The intention of Christ in using the expression *generatio vitis* is not obvious. The followers of Calvin do not doubt that Christ termed what He gave the Apostles "the fruit of the vine"—that is, wine—thus to maintain that

it is simply bread and wine, and to exclude the Body and Blood of Christ. The early Fathers (Origen, *Tract. on S. Matt.* xxx. ; S. Cyprian, *Ep.* lxxviii. to *Cæcilian* ; S. Chrysostom, *Hom. in loc.*, lxxxiii. ; S. Epiphanius, *Hær.* xlvii. ; S. Jerome, *Comment.* ; S. Augustin, *Quæst. Evangel.*, i. 42 ; Bede, Euthymius, Theophylact, *in loc.*) refer it to the Blood of Christ, but in another sense than that of the followers of Calvin.

These persons say that Christ called what He gave to the Apostles wine, because it was wine ; but the Fathers above mentioned say that He called the wine His Blood (as in *S. John* He had called the bread His Body) ; and He called it *generatio vitis*, by a periphrasis, because He Himself was the true vine. They say that this opinion is apparently confirmed by the narration and context of *S. Matthew* and *S. Mark*, who, when they had said that Christ took the chalice and gave it to the disciples, and said, "This is My Blood," added the words, "I will not drink from henceforth of this fruit (*genimine*) of the vine".

But these words can hardly be received as applicable to the Blood of Christ :

1. Because what *S. Matthew* and *S. Mark* relate here that Christ said of the chalice, *S. Luke* says that He also said of the Pasch—that is, the lamb : "With desire I have desired to eat this Pasch with you before I suffer. For I say to you that from this time I will not eat it till it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God" (xxii. 15, 16). These words, therefore, which both *S. Matthew* and *S. Mark* relate as spoken by Christ of the chalice, were not spoken of that in which He gave His Blood, but of that which, as has been said, the master of the house was accustomed at the Paschal feast to give to those who sat at meat.

2. Christ did not give that desire as the reason of His giving His Blood, but when He had given it He gave another, "which shall be shed for you". But He gave as

the reason of His wish to eat this supper with them that it was the last, as explained by S. Luke.

Besides, it cannot be doubted that Christ spoke in the usual manner of men, who, when about to leave their friends, say, "We shall not drink together again". But Christ would not have said this of His Blood, which, although it was true blood, was given under a ceremony and Sacrament; but He said it of the true and right supper, to which also His words apply better.

3. The words which follow, "when I shall drink it," can only be understood, as will be shortly shown, of heaven; for in heaven He will not drink His Blood: neither literally nor in metaphor. But He will drink wine in metaphor, for He said: "I dispose to you, as My Father hath disposed to Me, a kingdom, that you may eat and drink at My table in My kingdom". He did not speak, therefore, of His Blood, but of wine, when He said, "I will not drink from henceforth of this fruit of the vine". This would tend to support our previous opinion, which is also that of S. Augustin and Euthymius, that there were not two cups, but one only. I only differ from them in that they suppose Christ to have said of this cup: (1) "I will not drink from henceforth of this fruit of the vine," but not to have said, "This is My Blood"; (2) and afterwards to have added, "This is My Blood," but not to have said, "I will not drink from henceforth," &c. I think, on the contrary, not only that S. Luke mentioned the chalice by anticipation, but also that he related in that anticipation in that place what Christ had said before of another chalice: "I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine".

Unless we say, perhaps, that there was one and the same chalice from which Christ drank at the Paschal and ordinary supper, and in which He afterwards gave His Blood; and that when He had first drunk at the Paschal supper, He added, "I will not drink from henceforth of this fruit



of the vine," and did not empty the chalice, but left some wine in it which He afterwards consecrated to be His Blood and gave to the Apostles ; and that the Evangelists so mixed up these words with that chalice that, unless read with attention, they might appear to have been spoken of the one in which He gave His Blood. It appears certain that the words were not spoken of the Blood of Christ. S. Matthew and S. Mark, therefore, without keeping the order of time, related the words which Christ spoke before the consecration of the chalice after it.

*Until that day when I shall drink it new.*

Some explain the word "new," that is, in a new manner, to refer not to the wine but to Christ ; as if He had said, "Until I drink it when I am renewed, that is, glorified". This is the opinion of S. Chrysostom, Euthymius, and Theophylact, whom many Moderns follow. But the word "new," if so explained, seems too forced as meaning "in a new manner," if referred, as these do, to different circumstances ; and because the word "it" (*illud*) does not appear to allow the idea, for it must necessarily refer to the wine (*vinum*). The wine itself, therefore, is called "new," not because it was to be drunk in some new manner, but to show that it would be of another quality and more excellent and pleasant, such as that by which all the blessed in heaven will be inebriated, as described in *Ps.* xxxv. 9. The Hebrews, whose language Christ adopted, call whatever is unusually excellent and sweet "new," as in *Ps.* xcv. 1 ; xcvi. 1 ; cxlix. 1.

*In the kingdom of My Father.*

Some think that these words refer to the beginning of the New Testament, which dates from the Supper at which Christ gave His Body and Blood of the New Testament. They do this that that fruit of the vine which Christ had

drunk before might be understood ; but the new fruit, that is, the new wine, is Christ's Blood. The design is good, but in no sense necessary. For the words of S. Matthew and S. Mark, "Until that day when I shall drink it new with you in the kingdom of My Father," make it clear that the kingdom of the Father cannot be understood of the institution of the New Testament, for the same night could not be "that day," much less the same hour, in which Christ was to institute the New Testament. Again, they do not appear to observe the design of Christ in saying this. He wished to support the spirits of the disciples, and reassure their minds, which had been cast down by His previous words : "I will not drink from henceforth of this fruit of the vine," and to fortify them by His words that follow : "Until that day when I shall drink it new with you in the kingdom of My Father". With this design, S. Luke relates the words of Christ after He had given them His Body and Blood : "I dispose to you as My Father hath disposed to Me a kingdom" (*S. Luke* xxii. 29). He consoled the Apostles as a dying father might console a son, by saying that he had left him an ample heritage, and there was no reason why he should weep. This could not have been said of the institution of the New Testament, but it might of the life eternal.

Others, as S. Jerome and Bede, think that the Church is called the kingdom of the Father. Others, again, take the words of the forty days, during which Christ often ate and drank with the Apostles after His Resurrection. This is the opinion of S. Chrysostom, Theophylact, and Euthymius. These explanations, however, are to be answered by the same arguments as the first. For "that day" can only refer to the most distant and last day, as the Day of Judgment is commonly called the Last Day, *Dies illa*. Besides, it may be observed that although the kingdom of God is sometimes put for the Church, and sometimes for

the Gospel, yet "the kingdom of the Father" is never spoken of but as heaven; because, probably, the Father alone has never been seen to come down from heaven.

Again, it may be observed that when Scripture speaks of eating or drinking in the kingdom of heaven, the kingdom is taken neither for the Church nor for the Gospel, but only for the life of the beatified (*Ps.* xvi. 15; *S. Matt.* viii. 11; *S. Luke* xiv. 15; xxii. 29, 30; *Apoc.* xix. 9). All which passages are without doubt to be understood of the celestial life of beatitude, as here the words of Christ, "In the kingdom of My Father," when He speaks of drinking.

Lastly, if the kingdom of heaven is taken for anything but the state of beatitude, the question is, how the term "new wine" is to be understood? For if taken of the Blood of Christ, it is not certain that Christ drank after the Resurrection; or if He did, it does not apply to so brief a portion of time. If taken for true wine after the Resurrection, He did not drink the new but the old. But the new wine agrees well with the life of beatitude, because, as said before, the Hebrews called everything sweet and pleasant "new," as the ancients fabled of nectar and ambrosia. In this sense, Origen (*Tract.* xxxv. *in loc.*), S. Gregory Nazianzen (*Orat.* ii. *in Sanct. Pasch.*), and Bede receive the words. One who prefers the first explanation of the words may object that this one does not satisfy, because it is not credible that Christ in such a short time would have changed the meaning of His words, so as to call the fruit of the vine at one moment true wine, and at another, metaphorically, the sweetness of eternal life—a slight objection. If Christ called His Blood the new wine, He changed the meaning of His words. For the Blood of Christ is not literal, but metaphorical, wine, and we must remember what has been said before, that Christ often in the same sentence uses the same word in a double sense,

and that, not only without any fault, but very elegantly, forcibly, and pointedly. "Let the dead bury their dead." In the first clause, He uses the word metaphorically; in the second, literally. So in *S. John* iv. 13, 14, which very closely resembles the passage of which we are speaking: "Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again, but he that shall drink of the water that I will give him, shall not thirst for ever. But the water that I will give him shall become in him a fountain of water, springing up into life everlasting." In the first clause, Christ speaks of water properly; in the second, metaphorically.

It may be objected, with more appearance of truth, that Christ said, "I will not drink of this fruit of the vine" (*ex hoc*) "until I drink it" (*illud*). For when He said *ex hoc*, with a periphrasis, He described the true wine, and when He said *illud*, He meant the same actual wine, because "that" (*illud*) refers to "this" (*hoc*).

These words, in this place, show neither the individual nor the species, but the whole genus, and whatever is contained, whether literally or metaphorically, under the name of wine; but in the text "this" (*hoc*) is taken for literal, "it" (*illud*) for metaphorical, wine; as if it had been said, "I will not drink wine hereafter until I drink that (*illud*) new with you in the kingdom of My Father".

Others object that Christ, after the Resurrection and before He ascended into heaven, often ate and drank with the Apostles, as S. Peter testifies (*Acts* x. 41).

We might, in the first place, deny that Christ drank wine, because Scripture does not say that He did; but granting as probable that He did so, if not always, yet occasionally, His words are to be understood in a human and ordinary sense; and when He said, "I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine," He only meant that He would not eat and drink with them as before. He did eat and drink with them, indeed, after the Resurrection, but not in His

usual manner, and as if to satisfy the requirements of nature, but occasionally, by the way, as by stealth, and only to show that He had risen from the dead. He was accustomed to speak of the actions which He did in another manner after His Resurrection to that before, as if He had not done them. "These are the words which I spoke to you while I was yet with you" (S. *Luke* xxiv. 44), as if He were not with them then; for He was so with them as to appear to them only occasionally. He was invisible, and not as before so as to be always with them, always be seen by them, always eating and drinking with them. In the same manner, though He sometimes ate and drank with the Apostles after the Resurrection, yet, as He only did so as through a glass, He does not make account of it.

Hence the reason of Christ's having used a periphrasis. Some say that He alluded to the usual form of thanksgiving among the Jews, which was in these words: "Blessed art Thou, Lord, King of the World, who givest us the fruit of the vine". It may be so, but it appears more probable that Christ spoke as He did for the sake of emphasis; for it is more, and of greater force, to say, with exaggeration, "I will not drink of the fruit of the vine," than to say, "I will not drink wine," as he speaks with more exaggeration who says that he will not eat anything that the earth produces, than one who says that he will not take any food, although there is none which the earth does not produce; for the periphrasis and manner of speech adds force to the words.

Verse 30. *And a hymn being said.*

*Καὶ ὑμνήσαντες.* These words show that not only Christ, but also the Apostles, sang the hymn, as Origen and S. Hilary say: though Bede, not regarding the Greek, thinks that Christ sang it alone. It is not clear whether they actually sang it, but from the words it is probable that they did. It may be an example of ecclesiastical hymno-

logy. S. Chrysostom accommodates it to the sacrifice of the Mass, concluding that no one should depart from church before the final thanksgiving. Some think that Christ sang some usual form of Jewish hymn; for the Evangelists say, as of some ordinary hymn, "The hymn being sung" (*hymno dicto*). Paul Bergensis says that the Jews, as a thanksgiving, used to sing seven psalms, from the cxii., the beginning of which is, "Praise the Lord, ye children" (*Laudate pueri*), to cxviii. Others think that Christ composed some new hymn. Neither is certain. The former opinion is the more probable, for the Jews used some fixed thanksgiving, and it must be believed, therefore, not only as their authorities teach, but also as we see it prescribed by God (*Deut.* viii. 10).

*They went out.*

They went out, either from the house where they had supped, or from the city. This will be treated of on *S. John* xiv. 31; xviii. 1. S. John relates many and most weighty words of Christ between the giving of the Sacrament, from chap. xiii. 30 to chap. xviii., to their going out. S. Luke also records some which are omitted by S. John—the contention between the Apostles as to which should be the greatest, and the other things explained in chap. xx. 25, and the words in *S. Luke* xxii. 28: "You are they who have continued with Me in My temptations, and I dispose to you as My Father hath disposed to Me a kingdom, that you may eat and drink with Me at My table in My kingdom, and may sit upon thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel". Hence it may be concluded that Judas had gone out before Christ, because of the words, "You are they that have continued with Me": as if He opposed to the eleven Apostles Judas, who had not continued with Him, but rather, as *Psa.* xl. 10, "The man in whom I trusted, who ate my bread, hath greatly supplanted me".

*Unto Mount Olivet.*

This mount was distant from Jerusalem a Sabbath day's journey—that is, one mile, or, as some say, two miles (*Acts* i. 12). It was certainly very near, as Christ used to go to it after He had supped. The Garden of Gethsemane was probably not on the mountain itself, but at the foot of it, as the Hebrew word, meaning a rich valley, indicates.

*Verse 31. All you shall be scandalised.*

This does not mean, as some have erroneously supposed, that the Apostles would lose their faith, nor, as others say, that they would waver or deny Christ, but that they would forsake Him. This is seen from the answer of S. Peter: "And Peter answering said, Although all shall be scandalised in Thee, I will never be scandalised"—that is, "Though all forsake Thee, I will not". None of them lost their faith, not even Peter himself, who denied Him. Some ancient authors, indeed, speak as if he had lost his faith, not distinguishing between the confession of faith from faith, and the denial of Christ from the loss of faith, which are very different things. S. Luke says that Christ said to Peter alone: "Simon, Simon, behold Satan hath desired to have you that he may sift you as wheat. But I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not" (xxii. 31). Then S. Matthew and S. Mark describe the events as if Christ had said the words after He had gone out of the house. S. Augustin (*De Consens.*, iii. 2) thinks that Christ first spoke what is related by S. John (xiii. 33), and that on this occasion S. Peter asked what is recorded by S. John (verse 36): "Lord, whither goest Thou?" and that Christ answered: "Whither I go thou canst not follow Me now, but thou shalt follow hereafter"; and that Peter replied: "Why cannot I follow Thee now? I will lay down my life for Thee." Then that Christ, seeing the confidence of Peter and his boastful promise, used the words related by S. Luke: "Simon,

Simon, Satan hath desired to have you that he may sift you as wheat" (xxii. 31). As to the words of S. Matthew (xxv. 31) and S. Mark (xiv. 27), "All you shall be scandalised in Me this night," either Christ, when He had spoken what S. Luke reports to Peter by himself, turned to the others and addressed them all, or, as what was said to Peter was said to all, S. Matthew and S. Mark have given not the words of Christ but His meaning.

*In Me.*

A Hebraism for "because of Me," when you see Me suffering unworthy treatment, you will take the occasion to forsake Me; that is, you will be scandalised in Me.

*For it is written.*

Christ applies the words of Zacharias (xiii. 7) to Himself; for although they were written of the priests of old, they were properly spoken of Him, as is plain from the verses preceding and following. Christ applied them not to teach the Apostles that they must necessarily forsake Him, and the necessity of the result acquit them of blame, but to show that their acting thus would be nothing strange to Him, for He knew it already, and it had been assuredly foretold by the Prophet: "I will strike the shepherd". In *Zacharias* the Hebrew is רָח. The LXX. read πατάξον. We might easily conclude, even from this passage, that for πατάξω we should substitute πᾶταξον, *percutere*, "strike," that the words of the Evangelist may not appear to differ from those of the Prophet, did we not see that this is sometimes the case. It is better, therefore, to say that the Evangelist follows the meaning, and not the words. In this sense, "strike" and "I will strike" have the same force. For it is God who commanded that the shepherd should be struck, and he who does a thing *per alium* does it *per se*. It shows,



therefore, that it was God who struck His own Son, as in *Rom. viii. 32.*

Verse 32. *But after I shall be risen again I will go before you into Galilee.*

Christ, by these few words, restored the spirits of the Apostles, saying that He would rise again from the dead, and that He would appear to them in Galilee.

Verse 34. *Amen, I say to thee that in this night, before the cock crow, thou shalt deny Me thrice.*

S. Mark says (xiv. 30): "Before the cock crow twice thou shalt deny Me thrice". Hence it has been asked how we are to understand this latter passage by the side of S. Matthew here. S. Luke (xxii. 34) and S. John (xiii. 38) say that the words were, "The cock shall not crow till thou deny Me thrice". A further question has been raised as to whether the word "thrice" applies to the crowing of the cock or to the denial of S. Peter. S. Augustin (*De Consens.*, iii. 2) thinks that the meaning is, "Before the cock crow, thou shalt begin to deny Me thrice"; as if Peter should have begun three denials before the cock crew, but not have finished them. It is plain from the above, and *S. Luke* xxii. 34, and *S. John* xiii. 38, that Christ meant to say that before the cock crew Peter should thrice deny Him. S. Augustin loses all the grace of the promise of Christ. The meaning is that in the briefest possible point of time he should not only once, or twice, but three times, deny Him. The result proves this, for S. Matthew (verses 74, 75), S. Luke (xxii. 60, 61), and S. John (xviii. 27), when they had related the three repeated denials of S. Peter, added, "And immediately the cock crew". It has been rightly observed that S. Matthew, S. Luke, and S. John mean by this crowing of the cock, not the sound which the bird utters in the middle of the night, but that before the dawn; for the

former is properly called the *gallicinium*, or "cock-crowing," *galli cantus*, because the first crowing is called by another name, "the midnight" (*media nox*). The time, therefore, which precedes the dawn, when the cock crows, if it were not called the "cock-crow" (*galli cantus*), could not be called by any other name. Scripture speaks thus: "And it came to pass about the cock-crowing, Raguel ordered his two servants to be called for," &c. (*Tobias* viii. 11), and so *S. Mark* xiii. 35. Before the dawn, therefore, which is properly called the time of cock-crowing, Peter thrice denied Christ, as *S. Matthew*, *S. Luke*, and *S. John* describe. This is the same thing as, "before the cock crow twice"—that is, once in the middle of the night and again before the dawn—Peter denied Christ thrice, as related by *S. Mark*.

It will be asked why *S. Mark* gave another description of this event than that of the other Evangelists. It appears probable that *S. Mark* learned from *S. Peter*, whose disciple he was, not only with what meaning, but even in what words, Christ foretold that Peter should deny Him three times that night, and that He used these same words. It seems most likely that Christ used the words of *S. Mark*, because they have greater force. For Christ opposes number to number, as if He had said, "Thou wilt be more active in denying Me than the cock in crowing; for before he crows twice thou shalt deny Me thrice". We see that the whole speech of Christ is emphatic: "Amen, I say to thee," and "in this night"; as if He had said: "In this very night in which thou boastest that even if thou shouldest die for Me thou wilt not deny Me, before the cock crow twice, thou shalt deny Me thrice".

Verse 36. *Into a country place.*

*Εἰς χωρίον.* The same word is used by *S. Mark*. It was a garden, as we learn from *S. John* xviii. 1, 26, which

was frequently visited by Christ for prayer (*S. John* xviii. 2). Judas knew that Christ often went thither, and *S. Luke* (xxii. 39) says: "He went out, according to His custom, to the Mount of Olives". Christ, therefore, did not go thither to conceal Himself, but rather that He might be more easily found by Judas and the band of soldiers, as those words of *S. John* denote.

*Which is called Gethsemani.*

It should rather have been called Gechemani, or Gese-mani—that is, "the eighth" valley or garden; or "the fruitful," because it was fertile; and "the eighth" because, as some are of opinion, that, as there were many pleasant country-houses and gardens around Jerusalem, they took their names from their relative distances from the city. Thus one was called the first garden, and another the second; as among the Romans there was the first, second, third from the central milestone. *S. Cyril* (*Comment. on S. John* xviii.) thinks that there was a mystery in Christ's seeking to be taken in a garden, and that the garden itself was a symbol of paradise; for when in paradise we were taken captive by the devil, and were delivered in a like paradise: the taking of Christ being the beginning of our freedom.

Verse 37. *Peter and the two sons of Zebedee.*

James and John. The reason of Christ's having taken some of the Apostles is obvious. He wished to have witnesses of His Prayer, His Pain, and His Death-sweat. As to His having chosen these three, the opinion of *S. Chrysostom* and *Theophylact* is, that they had seen His glory and majesty in the Transfiguration, and it was to be feared lest the others, who had not done so, should be offended by His suffering. It may be more simply supposed that He took these three rather than the others because He trusted them more, and was therefore more

accustomed to admit them to all His more secret actions, as in the Transfiguration.

*He began to grow sorrowful and to be sad.*

"ἤρξατο λυπείσθαι καὶ ἀδημονεῖν, *Tristari et anxio esse animo.* ἀδημονεῖν describes one who is struck by a fear so intense as to render him as it were half dead and thunder-struck. But the Evangelists S. Matthew and S. Mark use the word to describe only the greatness of the sorrow of Christ. Some formerly denied that there was any true sorrowfulness in Christ, as we learn from S. Chrysostom (*in loc.*), S. Ambrose (*Comm. on S. Luke xxii.*), and S. John Damascus (*De Hæres*, lxxxiv.). S. Hilary says, perhaps incongruously, that Christ felt no pain. Evagrius (*On Ps. lxviii.*) asserts the same error as that of the Emperor Justinian, who thought Christ impassible. We can have no better witness than Christ Himself. He said that His soul was troubled even unto death.

2. Others, on the contrary, have said, as we are told by S. Thomas in his *Commentary*, that even in His Godhead Christ felt suffering and sorrow, thinking too meanly of the Godhead.

3. Others, again, say that the sorrowfulness of Christ was not suffering—*passio*, πάθος—but *propassio*, προπαθεία: the former disturbing the soul in some degree, and extorting some consent of the will, however imperfect; the latter causing some feeling of either pain or pleasure, but not disturbing the soul from its calmness. Origen, S. Jerome, and Bede think that Christ was affected by sorrow, and they explain the word ἤρξατο to mean that the sorrow was begun indeed, but not ended; for *propassio* had not extended on to *passio*. The words may rather be thought to have the force of Christ's, not being compelled when danger was at hand to be sorrowful, but being so of His own choice; when He would, as far as He would, and where and

in what manner He would, as is seen from other circumstances. A short time before, when He was with the eleven disciples, He was not sorrowful, because He did not please that His sorrow should be known to them; but when He had gone from them, and was with those three alone, He immediately began to be sorrowful, as the Evangelists have described it; showing that when He pleased, and in the manner in which He pleased, He was sorrowful. S. Augustin (*On Ps. lxxxvii.*) says, to the same effect: "The Lord Jesus underwent these results of human infirmity as He underwent the flesh of human infirmity, and the death of His human flesh; not from the necessity of His condition, but from His will of sympathy; that He might transfigure into Himself His Body, which is the Church, He having designed to be the Head—that is, His members among His saints and the faithful: that if it should happen to any of them among their human temptations to be sorrowful and to grieve, he should not therefore think himself an alien to His grace, and that his sufferings were sins, but merely proofs of human infirmities, as it were a kind of keynote; and that His Body itself might learn from Him, its Head".

S. John Damascus rightly says (*De Fid. Orthodox.*, iii. 20): "Between our sufferings and Christ's there is this difference: ours precede, and Christ's follow, the act of the will; that is, we, even against our will, have suffering: Christ has it only with His will. Ours, again, arise from natural necessity and original sin: Christ's spring neither from sin nor necessity, but from His pity for us. He hungered for us, He thirsted for us, He grieved for us." Hence the assertion of some learned men and Catholic doctors that Christ, by the condition of human nature, feared death, may be rather explained than refuted. It may be taken to mean that Christ grieved, not from the condition and necessity of nature, but that by His own will He so relinquished His

nature in its own natural condition, that He grieved as much as He would have done if His nature had been merely human.

It has been disputed with much subtlety in the schools how it was that Christ, when He was in happiness, had sorrow. Some have answered that He had happiness only in the higher part of His soul, but His body had it not yet, that He might suffer. Beatitude had not yet effused itself into it, but sorrow was in His lower part, which is in the body. But Christ affirmed that His soul was sorrowful even unto death, by which He showed that sorrow possessed His entire soul; and soon after He said: "Not as I will, but as Thou wilt"; and more plainly in *S. Luke*: "Not My will, but Thine be done". By this He shows that even in His will, which is the higher point of His soul, He was sorrowful, and shrank from death; and, in fact, from that passage, the Sixth Œcumenical Council and other ancient authorities proved that there were two wills in Christ, a divine and a human. They, therefore, who explain "will" to mean here the appetite of the sentient part are not to be approved. It is better defined that, even when in happiness, it was ordered by some dispensation that Christ should admit sorrow even into the higher part of His soul; for as He could restrain His beatitude from flowing down into His body, that He might be able to suffer; so He could press it down, and, in a manner, conceal it, that He might yield for a time to sorrow, which was one future part of His Passion.

Again, it has been asked why Christ was sorrowful. *S. Hilary*, *S. Jerome*, and *Bede* say that it was not from fear of death, but from pity for the disciples, because they would suffer offence, and that this is the meaning of His subsequent words, "My soul is sorrowful"; as if He had said: "When the hour of death shall actually come it will not be sorrowful, because the scandal will then have

passed". S. Hilary thinks that the grief was especially for Judas, because Christ knew that he would be lost. These writers have been careful not to appear to make Christ appear more fearful than some of His own martyrs. But if the above be admitted as truth, this will not be necessary. Christ feared, indeed, but freely and of His own will. Hence it happened that, although He may appear to have feared death more than some of His own martyrs, He cannot be called more fearful than they. For he is not fearful, but most valiant, who does not suffer fear but when He wills to do so ; and they all teach that Christ so feared death, that if it be denied the authority of Scripture cannot stand.

But if He feared death of His own will, why did He will to fear it ?

The answer may be given in one word. If He died of His own will, why did He will to die ? Assuredly He willed it for us ; and for us He felt sorrow ; for His pain, His sorrow, His bloody sweat, were all preludes of His death ; and it was a great and an additional benefit that He pleased to undergo no sudden death, like those who are doomed to be executed unexpectedly and when not expecting to die, but one with all its attendant circumstances—the sorrow, the scourging, the insults, the ignominy, and other things that do not usually attend death, as the bloody sweat—so that we may truly say, with *Ps.* cxiv. 3, "The sorrows of death compassed me, and the perils of hell have found me".

Another reason is given by S. Jerome, Bede, Euthymius, and Theophylact in his *Commentary*, and S. Augustin (*On Ps.* lxxxvii.): That Christ feared and was sorrowful that He might show Himself to be true man, that his Members, that is, the faithful, if they were sorrowful might not think it sin to be so. But why did He appear to have been oppressed with a greater dread of death than other

men, so that, as S. Luke relates (xxii. 44), great drops, or, as in the Greek, *θρόμβοι*, "gouts," flowed down from His body to the earth? S. Hilary, indeed (*De Trin.*, x.), and S. Jerome, against the Pelagians of his time (ii.), say that the account of this sweat and the angel that strengthened Him are omitted in many copies of both Greek and Latin; but it is more probable that there was an omission of these particulars than that anyone would have added them. Others do not deny the words, but destroy their force; as if Christ did not actually sweat blood, but was only said to do so by a proverbial expression, meaning that He was seized by a violent terror: as we say of those who are under some great anxiety and mental pressure, "They sweat drops of blood". This is held by Theophylact and Euthymius; but when the Evangelist says that His sweat flowed down to the ground, he cannot be understood otherwise than as meaning that Christ sweated actual blood. As regards this act, although some think it to have been against nature, it may rather appear, on the other hand, to have been a natural sweat, that by some mystery His whole Body, which is the Church, might be seen to be suffused with His blood; but because it was unusual it seemed to be a miracle, as all rare events are apt to be considered. Aristotle says that this phenomenon may be natural, and that it has happened at times (*Hist. Anim.*, vii. 16; *De Part. Anim.*, iii. 5). Natural reason teaches us that it might happen, especially in men of rare texture and delicate constitution. For as the sweat is nothing but the watery part of the blood which is in the veins, as that part passes off in all of us in sweat, why may not, in very rare cases, and in individuals of a delicate frame and unusually subtle blood, that finer blood itself flow off in the form of sweat? And as we see men sweat when seized by sudden fear, so Christ, who was of a most delicate nature, when under apprehension of a most ignominious death,



may have naturally sweated blood. It is rather to be wondered at that He should have been so apprehensive of death as to sweat blood. It is said by S. Thomas that it was not merely death, but the cause of it that most deeply agitated His mind ; namely, the sins of mankind. S. Ambrose has spoken well and devoutly of this in his *Commentary on S. Luke* xxii. : "It had benefited me less if Christ had not taken my passions. He grieved, therefore, for me, who had no cause of grief for Himself, and laying aside the delights of His Eternal Divinity, He is affected by the weariness of my infirmity. He took my sorrow, that He might share His joy with me, and, in our footsteps, He descended even to the anguish of death, to recall us to life. I speak of grief, therefore, with confidence, because I preach the Cross ; for Christ took not the appearance, but the truth of Incarnation. He ought, therefore, to take grief also, that He might conquer, not exclude, sorrow. For they who endure the stupor rather than have the pain of wounds, have no praise for fortitude."

Verse 38. *My soul is sorrowful even unto death.*

*Περὶ λυπος*, "My soul is besieged on every side with sorrow". In the same sense in all respects as that in which David said, in the person of Christ, "The sorrows of death have compassed me, and the pains of hell have found me" (*Ps.* cxiv. 3).

On the words, "even unto death," Origen, S. Hilary, and S. Jerome say that the meaning is as if Christ had said, "My soul is sorrowful ; but the sorrow will endure only until death". The explanation, however, seems foreign to the text ; for Christ did not desire to diminish the amount of His sorrow, but rather to increase it. He would have diminished it if He had said that it would endure only until His death. There is another more modern opinion : "My soul is so sorrowful that the sorrow itself seems to bring

Me death". As we say, "I am dying of grief," "I am dying of hunger". The true meaning is that of Euthymius: "My soul is as sorrowful as if I were already dying". David said in the above psalm: "The pains of hell have found me"; that is, they are as heavy as those that are felt in death.

*Stay you here.*

*Meivare, sustinete.* S. Mark uses the same word (xiv. 34). Christ had lately told the other disciples not to remain, but to sit (verse 36). He commanded these to remain and watch because they were nearer to His danger, and He wished them to witness it: as He directed them, a little after, not only to remain and watch, but also to pray (verse 41).

*Verse 39. And going.*

S. Luke (xxii. 41) says: "He was withdrawn away from them". Some think that He went away from those three most beloved disciples unwillingly.

*A little farther.*

S. Luke has described the distance (xxii. 41): "He was withdrawn away from them a stone's cast". It may be asked why Christ went from the disciples to pray? He followed His own precept, as S. Thomas (*Comment. in loc.*) says: "When thou shalt pray, enter into thy chamber and shut the door". He probably followed an ordinary and reverent custom. For although we pray without shame before others, there are many things in our prayers, many outward marks of our zeal and warmth, which we are ashamed to show before others, but not when alone.

*He fell upon His face.*

S. Mark (xiv. 35) says: "He fell flat on the ground"; and S. Luke: "Kneeling down, He prayed". Hence it is

not to be understood that He fell wholly prostrate on the earth, but that He knelt down. S. Mark says that He fell, because one who bends his knee on the earth falls upon it.

*My Father, if it be possible.*

Christ knew that absolutely this was possible to God, as He said (S. Mark xiv. 36): "Abba, Father, all things are possible to Thee"; but as there had been a divine decree that He should die for us, He knew that it was impossible that that chalice should pass from Him. Why, then, did He ask that if possible it should do so? He left His human nature to perform its own part, as He would have done if it had never been united to His Divinity, and He had known nothing of the divine decree. From a comparison of S. Matthew and S. Mark, we see that S. Augustin (*De Consens.*, iii. 4) is correct in saying that the words "If it be possible" and "If Thou wilt" have the same meaning; for, with regard to what is called "absolute power," Christ did not deny it, nor call it into question, but, as if for caution, He added the words of S. Mark: "All things are possible to Thee"; but when He added, "But not what I will," He showed that by the words, "If it be possible," He meant only, "If Thou wilt" (*si vis*), or, "things remaining unaffected," or "If, Thy glory safe, Thou wilt" (*velle potes*).

The words, "Father," &c., are the beginning of a prayer well fitted for gaining favour, as S. Jerome says. S. Mark united the Chaldaic and Greek words, "Abba, Πάτερ," explaining the former by the latter. S. Paul does the same in two places—*Rom.* viii. 15; *Galat.* iv. 6. S. Augustin thinks this a mystery, to show that God is the Father of both Jews and Gentiles.

*Pass.*

Παρελθέτω ἀπ' ἐμοῦ, *prætereat a me*; or, as the Latins say, *prætereat me*.

*This chalice.*

Christ's Passion—that terrible death. Why it is called a “chalice” has been explained on chap. xx. 22.

*Nevertheless, not as I will, but as Thou wilt.*

It is seen from these words that there were two wills in Christ—a divine and a human, as the Sixth General Council proved from this passage. This was not ruled in opposition to S. Paul, who says that “Christ was heard for His reverence” (*Heb.* v. 7). Although the chalice did not pass from Him, His prayer was not unheard ; for He prayed under a condition : “If it be possible,” that is, “If Thou wilt” ; but the Father would not.

It may be asked, why Christ, of His human nature, shrank from death, when God willed that He should die? For He seems to have had a will contrary to that of God, which He could not have had without sin. For sin, as S. Augustin (*Cont. Faust.*, xxii. 27) defines it, is “every word, act, or desire that is contrary to the Law of God and the divine will”. Christ, as has been said before, spoke in this prayer as if He were merely a man to whom the divine will was unknown, and who had not strength to overcome death. He left His human nature as if it were His only one, His divine being kept back that He might discharge His office more fully among men. Not everyone who wishes anything contrarily to the divine will at once commits sin, but he who wishes, speaks, or does anything against it when known to him and seen by him. We do not sin when we ask of God long life and good health for our parents ; we should rather sin if we did not, though it may be God's will that they should shortly die : because that will was not known to us, and the other was : that we should honour our parents, and wish them all good. We may, again, sometimes wish for a thing that is contrary to the divine will, though known

to us to be so, and not sin : so that the will be not made known to us by precept. My father is dead. I cannot doubt that he died by the divine will ; yet I might wish that he had not died, and commit no sin. Add that this will of Christ by which He refused (*recusavit*) death, was not full and absolute, but what is termed by divines conditional. For He did not say to Himself, "I will not die," but, "I would not die, if it might be so". The wish was not sin, as there was a guiltless condition annexed.

Verse 40. *And He cometh to His disciples.*

He came to His disciples because He had finished His prayer ; and He wished, after some interval, to pray three times ; or He came, as the result proved, to arouse and warn them.

*And He findeth them asleep.*

Grief causes tears and vapours in the brain, from which arises sleep. We see that infants, after they have wept much, sleep deeply ; and that men, when in trouble, are oppressed with sleep.

*What, could you not watch one hour with Me ?*

These words, as Euthymius observes, are to be read as a double question. The first interrogation is to be put after the word "what," and the second after the words that follow. For the word "what" is not to be referred to "could you," but to what Peter in the first place, and then all the others in like manner, had said before : "Though I should die with Thee," &c. Christ then said, in a manner, "Are you so ready to die with Me, and yet you could not watch one hour with Me?" Christ said this to Peter alone, because he had made the promise first, and most eagerly of all. So S. Jerome, S. Chrysostom, Bede, Theophylact, and Euthymius. S. Mark says that Christ addressed Peter alone—"Could you not," &c., and it probably was so ; but

because what Christ said to Peter as the chief, He said to all. S. Matthew gives the sense and not the words, saying that Christ spoke to all. The words "with Me" were calculated to prick the hearts of the disciples deeply. "While I was praying, toiling, and struggling with death, you, who ought to fight while I am sleeping, could not watch for even the briefest period of time possible."

*That ye enter not into temptation.*

Not to enter into temptation, in the language of Bede, Euthymius, Theophylact, and others later, does not mean, not to fall into, but to overcome it. The words may more probably mean, not to run into it; for we are commanded to ask of God, as conscious of our own weakness, not to overcome temptation only, but not even to come into the danger of it. It is safer not to fight than to conquer. In this sense, we pray God not to lead us into temptation, as explained on chap. vi. 13.

*The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.*

This is the reason why they ought to pray; although their minds and will do not fail, their strength does, unless they gain grace from God through prayer.

The spirit here meant is not the Holy Ghost, not the Spirit of Christ Himself, but the will of the disciples. So S. Paul (1 Cor. vii. 34): "That she" (the virgin) "may be holy both in body and spirit," pure not only in person, but also in will. Christ appears to allude to the former boast of the Apostles. They showed great zeal and great courage when they said one after another, "Though I should die with Thee, I will not deny Thee," repeating the words of S. Peter. Christ did not wish to show disapprobation of their zeal, He rather praised it in fact; He admonished them, however, of the infirmity of their flesh, and taught them that, although strong and prompt in His

service, they must still pray, because their flesh was weak. In the words of S. Paul, "we have this treasure in earthen vessels" (2 *Cor.* iv. 7).

*Again the second time.*

Unless we understand the Hebrew, this will seem tautological. The Hebrews had said וְתִבְשַׁנִּית and He returned a second time and prayed, as if, *Tu conversus vivificabis me*, that is, "Thou shalt make live again". We have explained the idiom more than once before. The meaning is the same, therefore, as if it had been said in other words, "He returned and prayed a second time".

Verse 43. *For their eyes were heavy.*

Either from sleep, as the night was now advanced, or, as S. Luke says, from sorrow (xxii. 45).

Verse 44. *And He prayed the third time.*

The question at once occurs, why Christ prayed three times, and neither more often nor less. It is the opinion of S. Chrysostom, Euthymius, and Theophylact that this number shows truth, perfection, and constancy. This may be understood from many passages of Scripture. The vessel full of all kinds of animals which S. Peter saw was thrice let down from heaven (*Acts* x. 16). S. Paul says that he thrice asked God to remove the angel of Satan (2 *Cor.* xii. 8). S. Peter thrice denied Christ. Christ thrice asked S. Peter, "Lovest thou Me more than these?" (*S. John* xxi. 15). In the same manner, Christ prayed thrice; so that that which is done three times seems to be done wholly and for ever, and Christ Himself taught us to pray always.

*Saying the self-same word.*

It is not necessary, Euthymius says, that Christ should have used the same words precisely, but rather that He

prayed to the same effect. But it would appear that S. Matthew said what he did with care, to show that Christ always held the same feeling and uttered the same prayer as before: "Not as I will, but as Thou wilt," to show that although He prayed thrice he never forgot His moderation, in which the praise of His whole prayer consists. This is the meaning of the words, "saying the self-same word". S. Luke has mentioned only one prayer, with the object, probably, of showing that, although Christ prayed thrice, yet, as S. Matthew says, His words and His prayer were the same; and he immediately adds that the angel appeared to Him. It is not certain, therefore, at which of the prayers the angel appeared. It is not probable, as some have thought, that he appeared at each.

We must believe that he was sent to answer Christ's prayer and to convey the feeling of the Father to Him; and if so, he would not come before the end of the third prayer, for if he had come sooner it is hardly probable that Christ would have repeated the same prayer. When S. Luke says, therefore, that Christ came to the disciples and found them sleeping, after he had described the appearance of the angel, we must understand him to speak by *hysteron proteron*. For he had begun to speak of the prayer before. Hence he wished to relate all the attending events, such as the descent of the angel, in one account.

And, therefore, when he says that the multitude and Judas came while Christ was yet speaking to the disciples, this is not to be referred to the words immediately preceding, "Why sleep ye? Arise, pray lest you enter into temptation;" for when Christ uttered these words Judas had not come. For, as is clear from S. Matthew and S. Mark, after Christ had said those words, He retired to pray twice, and when He returned to the disciples the



third time He did not say "Watch," &c., but "Sleep ye now and take your rest" (verse 45), and then Judas appeared.

We must understand S. Luke's words, therefore, "While He was yet speaking," not of what He had said, but of what He had not said (*non ea quæ dixerat sed ea quæ tacuerat*); that is, the words, "When He was yet speaking to the disciples," do not apply then, but afterwards.

But, as from the three prayers S. Luke makes one, so he makes one discourse with the Apostles out of the three, uniting the events of the third to the first.

*Verse 45. Sleep ye now and take your rest.*

S. Augustin (*De Consens.*, iii. 4) and Bede think that Christ said this not ironically, but with a serious meaning, because S. Mark says (xiv. 41), "It is enough," as if He had said: "It is enough that you have watched hitherto; now take your rest". S. Chrysostom, Euthymius, and Theophylact, however, take the words as ironical, as if Christ had directed them to sleep and take their rest when they ought least to do so, the enemy being at hand—upbraiding them, as it were, because, when He had previously ordered them to watch, they slept.

*Into the hands of sinners.*

The Gentiles. The Hebrews called all Gentiles, absolutely, sinners, as we find in *S. Luke* xxiv. 7 and *Gal.* ii. 15. The greater number of those who came to seize Christ were Roman soldiers; because, as S. John says (xviii. 3): "Judas having received a band of soldiers and servants from the chief priests and the Pharisees, cometh hither with lanterns and torches and weapons". Judas received a band of soldiers.

Verse 47. *As He yet spoke.*

The three Evangelists—S. Matthew, S. Mark, S. Luke—have said that Judas came while Christ was speaking, with the design, probably, of showing that the words uttered by Him just before (verse 46) were true: “Rise, let us go; behold he is at hand that will betray Me”. The same thing is said by S. John in other words (xviii. 4).

*And behold Judas.*

S. Matthew names Judas as first, as does S. Mark also. S. Luke, however, mentions the multitude first, and then Judas, because perhaps the multitude came first.

*A great multitude.*

S. Mark and S. Luke say the same. S. John (xviii. 3) says, “Judas having received a band of soldiers and servants”. Hence it follows that men of all ranks came to take Christ. One of the twelve who betrayed Him, and who brought the servants of the priests, scribes, and elders of the people,—for all the Evangelists say that he whose ear Peter cut off was a servant of the high priest,—and the soldiers who were Gentiles, and who came with arms, as if against some great criminal, or, perhaps, as fearing His disciples; and with torches, for it was dark.

Verse 48. *Gave them a sign.*

Judas had given one before. Christ was so well known to all that we may wonder why there was any need of a sign. Origen (*in loc.*) says that it was a tradition of his time that Christ had two faces: one a natural and ordinary one in which all men knew Him, the other assumed by Him at times, as in the Transfiguration. Theophylact, with more reason, says that the greater number of those who came to seize Christ were soldiers; that is, Gentiles who were not used to hear Him, as being men who had no part in the religion of the Jews.

Leontius, in his *Commentary on S. John* xviii. 5, thinks that by His own power Christ caused not only the soldiers but even Judas himself, who had been so long with Him, not to know Him. The same is the opinion of S. Chrysostom, Theodore Heracleota (in the *Catena Græca*), S. Cyril and Theophylact (*On S. John* xviii. 5). Nor, was the darkness the reason; for the Evangelist had said before that the soldiers came with lanterns and torches; and, again, the same Evangelist (*S. John* xviii. 5) added, "And Judas also who betrayed Him stood with them"; as meaning, that although Judas, who had come to point out Christ, was with them they did not know Him. Theodore of Mopsuestia thinks that the Evangelist said that Judas was with them, to show his want of shame and probity; for even when he had seen so great a miracle he did not cease from his wicked design.

But why did he give them this particular sign rather than any other? Probably because he desired to give them a sign by which he might at once betray Christ to the soldiers and conceal his treachery from Him. He would not have succeeded if he had given them some unusual sign. It was the custom of the Jews to greet each other with a kiss, especially the inferior the superior; and of all, indeed, who desired to show extraordinary love to those whom they so saluted. So *Gen.* xxix. 11, 13; xxxiii. 4; xlv. 15; *Exod.* iv. 27; xviii. 7. The same custom was in use among Christians (*Acts* xx. 37; *Rom.* xvi. 16; 1 *Cor.* xvi. 20; 2 *Cor.* xiii. 12; 1 *Thess.* v. 26; 1 *Peter* v. 14); and long after these times, as Tertullian says in his *De Oratione*, "This is what Christ complained of to the Pharisee". *S. Luke* vii. 45: "Thou gavest Me no kiss, but she since she came in hath not ceased to kiss My feet". The unhappy Judas thought to conceal his wickedness from Christ, for he had never really believed in Him; but, as S. Jerome and Bede say, he thought that

His miracles were done by magical arts, as Christ Himself signifies (*S. John* vi. 65) : "There are some of you that believe not". He said this in conversation with the Apostles. The Evangelist tells us that Christ said this because of Judas : "For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that did not believe, and who he was that would betray Him" (*S. John ut sup.*). Origen refers to two opinions as to why Judas betrayed Christ by this sign rather than any other :

1. He felt some respect for Christ, and he had not yet lost all shame ; so that although he kissed Christ, on the one hand, he wished that kiss at the same time to be a sign to the soldiers. Leontius mentions this opinion with approbation.

2. If he had used any uncommon sign, Christ would have understood his design, and, as He had done on other occasions, would have conveyed Himself away.

### *Hold Him fast.*

S. Mark (xiv. 44) says that Judas added, "Lead Him away carefully". He feared lest Christ should escape, and he himself lose both his promised reward and his Master ; for he knew that when the Jews wished to hold Christ He had often escaped them (*S. Luke* iv. 30 ; *S. John* viii. 59). This is the opinion of S. Chrysostom and S. Jerome. S. John says that "Jesus, knowing all things, went forth and said, Whom seek ye?" These are not the words of a man in fear, who would deny that he was he whom they had come to seek, but, as Leontius says, of one undismayed, and who challenged them.

### Verse 49. *Hail, Rabbi.*

Judas endeavoured, by his words and kiss, to conceal his wickedness. On the other hand, Christ shows that He was not ignorant with what intention Judas came, as He asked

him (verse 50), "Friend, whereto art thou come?" and, "Dost thou betray the Son of man with a kiss?" (*S. Luke* xxii. 48). On the other hand, they to whom he gave the sign did not know Christ even after it was given, for it is probable that Judas gave the kiss before Christ asked the soldiers, "Whom seek ye?" as *S. John* says (xviii. 4). It appears from this that they did not yet know Christ. This idea is confirmed by their answer, for they did not say, "We seek Thee," but "Jesus of Nazareth," and it was necessary for Christ to ask them twice before they knew Him. If Christ had asked them this before Judas gave them the sign there would have been no need of the sign; for Christ had already said twice to them, "I am He". Of this opinion is *S. Augustin* (*De Consens.*, v. 3).

Verse 50. *Friend, whereto art thou come?*

Christ appears, by these words, to declare, not only that He knew why Judas came, but even to excite His shame-faced and lingering betrayer to give Him up boldly, as He had said after supper, "That thou doest, do quickly" (*S. John* xiii. 27), and as the victim is apt to say to the executioner, "Do thine office".

We must think, too, that Christ first said what is found in *S. Luke* xxii. 48: "Betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss?" then what *S. Matthew* and *S. Mark* record: "Friend, whereto art thou come?" and, last of all, what *S. John* says: "Whom seek ye?" This is the opinion of *S. Augustin* (*De Consens.*, iii. 5). But *Leontius* thinks otherwise.

*Then.*

This is not to be referred to the words immediately preceding, "Friend, whereto art thou come?" as if, as soon as Christ had said these words, the soldiers laid their hands upon Him, but to those of *S. John* (xviii. 6, 8), when Christ said twice, "I am He". By these words He gave

them power to seize Him, and without them their hands would have been tied.

Verse 51. *And behold one of them that were with Jesus.*

Either one of the three whom Christ took with Him when He went apart to pray ; for S. Peter was one of the three, or one of the eleven who were with Christ. The former is the more probable, because when Judas came with the soldiers Christ was speaking with those three alone, as S. Matthew, S. Mark, and S. Luke plainly signify. S. John says that that one was Simon Peter (xviii. 10). S. Luke implies that all the disciples who were present were prepared to resist and to fight ; for they all asked Christ if they should strike with the sword (*S. Luke* xxii. 49). They had not, perhaps, understood what Christ had said a little before (verse 38) : “ It is enough”. He had answered the Apostles when they said, “ Lord, behold here are two swords,” with the above words. When He said (verse 36), “ He that hath not, let him sell his coat and buy a sword,” He signified that He had no need of arms for Himself or His disciples, but only that a great danger, such as men ward off by arms, was impending. He did not mean, when He said, “ It is enough,” that the enemy was to be resisted by those swords, nor that they needed more ; but He spoke those words because He had need neither of these nor of any other swords.

When they all asked Christ if they should strike with the sword, Peter, before Christ answered, struck the servant of the high priest. It is likely that the man, as being the servant, was more forward than the rest, as trusting in his master’s authority, and following his malignity and hatred of Christ, in his endeavour to be the first to lay hands upon Him. Peter did not wait for Christ’s answer ; but he endeavoured to repel an audacious man, who was attacking his Master, with an audacity greater than his own.

*Cut off his ear.*

S. Luke and S. John say that it was the right ear. In this many think that there lies a mystery. It may be so or not. We are seeking, not for allegories, but for the literal and true meaning of Scripture. It is not clear whether S. Peter so cut off the ear that it fell to the ground. More probably it was cut quite off, as the expression of the Evangelist evidently implies. S. Luke speaks as if it had not been wholly severed, as he does not say that Christ replaced it, but "When He had touched his ear He healed him" (xxii. 51).

Verse 52. *All that take the sword shall perish with the sword.*

Origen explains these words as follows: "All who are the authors of wars or sedition shall be destroyed in the war which they have raised". S. Jerome and Bede say that such shall perish, not by the material sword, but by the spiritual; that is, by divine vengeance, which shall overtake them either in this world or the next. Euthymius thinks that Christ spoke of the Jews alone, who, He signifies, in punishment of His death, shall perish by the swords of the Romans. But what has this to do with S. Peter, who took the sword? Christ, therefore, does not say that all who take the sword shall of necessity perish by the sword, for the contrary is the fact. He only cites the law which orders the homicide to be put to death (*Gen. ix. 6*). He does not say what punishment they shall of necessity undergo, but what they merit. So say S. Augustin (*Quæst. 104 in Vet. et Nov. Test.*) and Theophylact (*in loc.*).

They who conclude from these words, as many do, that even the judge must not use the sword, are void of reason, and may be easily answered from S. Paul (*Rom. xiii. 4*). He there affirms that the judge has his power from God,

and bears not the sword in vain, having received the weapon itself, as it were, from God. He shall not perish, therefore, by the sword if he do use it; for he does not abuse it; that is, he does not assume and usurp it by private authority, but he has it as given by God.

It has been asked why Christ blamed S. Peter for repelling force by force, and that in defence of his Master, an act which every natural law, divine or human, permitted. S. Augustin thinks that S. Peter was not blamed for cutting off the ear of the servant of the high priest, for it was done by permission of Christ, and that this is the meaning of *S. Luke* xxii. 51: "Suffer ye thus far". *S. John* xviii. 11, put by the side of the words of S. Matthew, here show, in his opinion, that S. Peter was only admonished not to fight again (*Quæst.* 104 in *Vet. et Nov. Test.*).

But it is clear that S. Peter was blamed by Christ; and why?

1. Because his act was not one of defence. For what could one man have done against a band, except to irritate and provoke them to treat Christ with greater cruelty?

2. Because he did not wait for Christ's permission, but struck at once.

3. Because he ought not to have hindered Christ's death even if he had had the power; for Christ Himself could have asked for twelve legions of angels from the Father to defend Him; but He would rather obey the will of that Father and fulfil the words of the Prophets, as He said Himself (verses 53, 54; *S. John* xviii. 11). Christ had rebuked Peter before for a similar offence (*S. Matt.* xvi. 23), because he tried to persuade Him to avoid death. But why, then, did Christ cite a general law? Because, wherever the exception does not exist the law holds, and in S. Peter's case the exception had no place. He, indeed, drew his sword with a good intent, but at a time and in a place where he ought not.



Verse 53. *Thinkest thou that I cannot ask My Father.*

It may be asked how Christ could say that His Father would give Him twelve legions of angels if He asked Him, when He had just before prayed that the cup should pass from Him, and had been refused? Christ spoke from the nature of the case, and not in consideration of the circumstances, as if He had said : "Do you not think that, if I had not known that it was determined by My Father that I should die, I could have asked for twelve legions of angels, and that He would have given them to Me?"

*Twelve legions of angels.*

Both the word and the thing is of Rome. The Evangelists, though speaking Greek, use it as they use many other Latin words. No nation but the Romans had legions. S. Matthew used the language of the Roman people who had now conquered Judæa. Among the Romans, as Vegetius (*De re Milit.*, ii. 2) and S. Jerome say, a legion consisted of 6000 men, or, as Polybius informs us (lib. vi.), ordinary legions contained 4200 foot and 300 horse. In wars of importance, the former numbered 5000 and the latter 300. However this may be, it is certain that Christ intended to describe a vast number of angels. Christ here places angels in opposition to men: the many to the few, the strong to the weak; of whom one in a single night slew 185,000 men of the army of Sennacherib. Christ seems to oppose angels, not to the soldiers, but to the disciples, who, with Judas, were twelve in number, and to have named twelve legions of angels, not more and not less, to show that for twelve individual men He could have had twelve legions of angels, each of which contained 6000 angels, if the statement of Vegetius be correct. Unless we say that the number twelve is here put for a full and perfect number as in chap. xix. 28, and as S. Augustin and Bede think. It is

explained on that passage. Origen concluded from this that the good angels were carrying on perpetual war against the evil ones, and that this is the meaning of the frequent expression in Scripture of "war in heaven". It is clear that angels are frequently sent by God to defend men, not only from evil angels, but from other men, as in 4 *Kings* xvii., where so vast a number was sent to the assistance of Eliseus, that they filled the whole mountain. This is the meaning of *Ps.* xxxiii. 8 : "The angel of the Lord shall encamp round about them that fear Him, and shall deliver them". The Hebrew is *הכה* *castrametabitur*; that is, He will pitch the camp of the angels round about them that none may harm them. So *Ps.* xc. 11. We know from *Daniel* (x. 13, 20, 21; xii. 1), that they are sometimes sent to fight for us in war. Christ alluded to this custom.

Verse 54. *How then shall the Scriptures be fulfilled, that ("quia") so it must be?*

This expression is incomplete, and it contains a Hebraism. The meaning is: How then shall the Scriptures be fulfilled, that so it must be? The word *quia* is used in the Hebrew sense for the infinitive mood—"So it ought to be done," *fieri oportuit*; as *S. Luke* xxiv. 25. The Scriptures and the Prophets to whom Christ alluded are Isaiah (liii. 10) and Daniel (ix. 26). Christ said this to show that He was not dragged to His death by violence, but that He went of His own free-will, to satisfy the decree of the Father, as declared by the Prophets. *S. John* (xviii. 11) says that Christ answered Peter otherwise: "The chalice which My Father hath given Me, shall I not drink it?" The opinion of *S. Augustin* (*De Consens.*, iii. 5) is probable—that Christ said both. First, "The chalice" (*S. John* xviii. 11), and second, "How then" (*S. Matt.* xxvi. 54).

It would appear that Christ here used the word "chalice" in a double sense. He had said a little before, "If it be

possible," &c., referring to a thing bitter and full of suffering. In the words (*S. John* xviii. 11), "The chalice which My Father hath given Me, shall I not drink it?" He seems to speak of it as pleasant and sweet; for His words have this force, as if He had said, "Given by My Father most beloved, it cannot be otherwise than pleasant"; for the word itself is used in both senses, because a sweet and bitter draught is given in the same cup: "My chalice which inebriateth me, how goodly is it!" (*Ps.* xxii. 5). For Christ speaks of His death in both senses, and He calls it a chalice in both. In His prayer, before He had heard His Father's voice, He calls it a chalice—that is, a thing hard and bitter; but now, when His Father's will was known, He calls the same death a chalice—that is, a thing most pleasant; for no obedience but is sweet, none but is most pleasant. *S. Luke* alone (xxii. 51) writes, "Suffer ye thus far," for pains far more heavy have to be endured by Me. From this it is plain that all the disciples were willing to fight for Christ, and He answered them all; but He rebuked Peter by name, because, without waiting for His answer, he wounded the servant of the high priest. *S. Luke* alone mentions that He touched the servant's ear and healed it. For Christ desired to correct the error of Peter, and at the same time to show those who seized Him that He had power to defend Himself from them, who by His mere touch could heal that wounded member; for it was He who "killeth and maketh alive; He bringeth down to hell and bringeth back again" (*1 Kings* ii. 6). *S. John* alone tells us that the man's name was Malchus (xviii. 10).

Verse 55. *Daily.*

*S. Mark* (xiv. 49) says: "I was daily with you in the Temple teaching, and you did not lay hands on Me. But that the Scriptures may be fulfilled." By these words

Christ showed His captors that it was not by their will or strength that He was taken, but that it was by the will of His Father and the decree of Scripture. For if it had been by their strength and design, they would often have seized Him before, when He sat daily in the Temple teaching. But when they endeavoured to do this they were not able (*S. Luke* iv. 30; *S. John* viii. 59). This is the explanation of *S. Luke* xxii. 53: "This is your hour"; that is, "Now you are able to do to Me whatever you will: not that you are stronger than I, but because the hour has come when it was determined by the Father that I should die".

Verse 56. *Then the disciples, all leaving Him, fled.*

Peter, however, followed Him, though afar off (verse 58). So did *S. John*, as he himself testifies (xviii. 15). Thus the words of *S. Matthew*, "all," must either be understood of the greater number, as *Theophylact* says, or we must suppose that all fled at first, and that Peter and John returned soon afterwards and followed Him.

Verse 57. *To Caiaphas.*

See, on Caiaphas, verse 3. *S. John* (xviii. 13) says that Christ was first led to Annas, and he writes as if he intended it to be understood that much of what he relates afterwards took place in the house of Annas; *e.g.*, the first denial of Peter, the first examination of Christ about His disciples and doctrine, and the buffets of one of the bystanders. Hence many of the learned, even *S. Augustin* himself, say that all that has been described happened at the house of Annas. But this opinion is clearly confuted by the accounts of the other Evangelists, who with one consent relate that the three denials of *S. Peter* took place in the house of Caiaphas the high priest. This is clear from *S. John* himself. For the first denial is said by him

to have been uttered in the house of the high priest, when he himself, who was known to the high priest, introduced Peter (xviii. 16). Annas was not high priest, but the father-in-law of Caiaphas, who was the high priest that year, as S. John says. For the words of S. Luke (iii. 2), that John the Baptist began to preach repentance under the high priests Annas and Caiaphas, are not to be understood as if both Annas and Caiaphas were high priests in the same year, for there was but one high priest : but that Annas had been high priest the year before, as Josephus informs us ; and as John preached both years, he is said to have preached during the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas.

This has escaped S. Augustin and others, from their not having observed the silent and obscure change of scene signified by S. John. For he signifies that Christ was brought from Annas to Caiaphas in such a manner as would be noticed only by an attentive reader. "And they led Him," he says (verses 13, 15), "away to Annas first, for he was father-in-law to Caiaphas, who was the high priest of that year. And Simon Peter followed Jesus, and so did another disciple, and that disciple was known to the high priest, and went in with Jesus into the court of the high priest." S. John does not say plainly that Christ was led from Annas to Caiaphas, but he gives a sufficient, and more than sufficient, hint of it when he says that Christ was led to Annas first—for he shows that Christ was led thence to Caiaphas, when saying that the disciple who was known to the high priest entered with Christ into the court of the high priest ; for he had said just before that Caiaphas was the high priest. When, therefore, he adds that he himself brought Peter into the court of the high priest, and that Peter was asked by the portress if he were not one of Christ's disciples, and he denied that he was, S. John leaves it beyond doubt that the denials of S. Peter, and the other

events described afterwards, took place in the house of Caiaphas.

What chiefly led these Fathers into this error are the words of S. John (verse 24), "And Annas sent Him bound to Caiaphas the high priest"—as if, after the first denial of S. Peter and the other events related by him as having now happened, Annas sent Christ bound to Caiaphas. Some think that these words are put out of their proper place, and that they ought to stand after verse 13: "And they led Him away to Annas first, for he was father-in-law to Caiaphas who was the high priest of that year," that it may follow immediately: "And Annas sent Him bound to Caiaphas the high priest". The whole sentence thus read coheres well, and S. Cyril reads it thus. If this correction does not seem good, it must be said that S. John, when he had related the first denial of Peter, and before he had plainly said that Christ was sent by Annas to Caiaphas, resumed by epanalepsis what he had at first omitted, *ἔπεμψεν αὐτὸν ὁ Ἄννας δεδεμένον πρὸς Καϊάφαν*, that it might be rendered, "Annas had sent Him bound to Caiaphas". But the former seems preferable. But why did they bring Christ to Annas first if he were not the high priest? S. John gives a tacit reason—he was the father-in-law of Caiaphas, who probably acted much by his advice, and possibly the house of Annas was on the way to that of Caiaphas.

Verse 59. *And the chief priests.*

The Greek adds, "and the elders".

Verse 60. *And they found not.*

*Καὶ οὐχ εὗρον, καὶ πολλῶν ψευδομαρτύρων προσελθόντων οὐχ εὗρον, Et non invenerunt, et quidem multis accedentibus falsis testibus non invenerunt.* Our translator had not seen the repetition of words, or did not think it worth expressing. Yet it has its force. What need was there of witnesses

when they had determined, justly or unjustly, to put Christ to death? They wished, however, by their iniquitous conduct, to make some show of justice.

Verse 61. *I am able to destroy the Temple of God.*

Why were these called false witnesses when they only seem to have said the truth? for Christ had said, "Destroy this Temple, and in three days I will raise it up" (*S. John* ii. 19). Origen, S. Chrysostom, S. Jerome, Bede, Theophylact, and Euthymius rightly reply that they are called false witnesses because they repeated with a wicked intention and in a perverted sense, and in other words, what Christ had said. He did not speak of that second Temple of Solomon, but of His own body, as S. John has explained. Nor did He say, "I am able to destroy"—though He was so—but "Destroy this Temple". These witnesses change His words still more in *S. Mark* xiv. 58. We find, from S. Matthew, that these false witnesses were two in number. The other Evangelists do not give the number. They were undoubtedly two in number, because they had been prepared and suborned by the chief priests and elders. They chose two because the Law ordered it thus (*Deut.* xvii. 6; xix. 15). So in like manner they sent two other false witnesses against S. Stephen (*Acts* vi. 13). S. Mark adds: "And their evidences were not agreeing"—καὶ οὐδὲ οὕτως ἴση ἦν ἡ μαρτυρία αὐτῶν, *Ac nec sic quidem eorum testimonium æquum erat aut equale*. Some have thought that the witnesses themselves did not agree among themselves. Our version appears to adopt this view, but the Greek bears another meaning: "And not even thus was their testimony equal"; that is, sufficient for the condemnation of Christ. For this is the force of the words, "Their evidences were not agreeing"; that is, although they declared that they heard Christ say, "I will destroy this Temple that is made with hands, and in three days

I will build another not made with hands," the chief priests did not think this evidence sufficient for the condemnation of Jesus to death. Witnesses agree among themselves when they use the same words in the same sense.

Why, then, it will be asked, was S. Stephen stoned for an offence not dissimilar? For two false witnesses said, "We heard him say that Jesus of Nazareth shall destroy this place". There was much in the words which the two false witnesses pretended to have heard Stephen say. He confessed that Jesus was God, which among the Jews was blasphemy, and, as such, punished by death (*Levit. xxiv. 16*). The witnesses added, besides, "and shall change the traditions which Moses delivered unto us".

Verse 62. *And the high priest, rising up.*

The judge ought not to rise up, but to sit. The high priest did not speak as a judge sitting on the judgment-seat, but as a priest in the synagogue, where everyone who spoke or read was accustomed to rise, as in *S. Luke iv. 16*.

*Answerest Thou nothing?*

What need was there for Christ to answer, when the accusations brought against Him were not sufficient even in the judgment of the priests, as *S. Mark (xiv. 55)* signifies? The wicked judge spoke from passion, and perverted the silence of Christ, which he ought to have taken as a proof of the worthlessness of the accusation, to mean guilt; as if He kept silence because He was conscious of being guilty. Evidence which appeared, even to him, frivolous, he, by unjust questioning, exaggerated: as if to say, "Answerest Thou nothing, when charges so heavy are brought against Thee?"

Verse 63. *I adjure Thee by the living God.*

Ἐξορκίζω σε κατὰ τοῦ Θεοῦ, τοῦ ζῶντος. This properly signifies, "In the name of God," and is intended, as by a



command, to bind one to speak or to act. It was in common use among the Jews, as we learn from the Holy Scriptures.

*If Thou be the Christ, the Son of God.*

"As Thou commonly teachest that Thou art, and as Thou callest Thyself." For this reason the Jews on other occasions had endeavoured to stone Jesus Christ. This was not the present subject, but the high priest asked Christ the question, because he was then seeking every means of condemning Him, and Christ used to confess that He was such. He thought that when asked the question under trial Christ would not deny it, and that he could not find a better reason for condemning Him to death than His being convicted of blasphemy.

For it was blasphemy among them for any man to call himself the Son of God ; for he could not be such by nature, unless he were God Himself. Thus the heresy of Arius was confuted even in the opinion of the Jews. It is said by S. Luke (xxii. 66) that these events took place "as soon as it was day". Hence some have considered this a different account, and that Christ was twice questioned. First, by the high priest, before midnight, when He was first brought before him. Secondly, by the whole council, when it was day. For He does not appear to have answered at first with sufficient plainness, but only to have said, "Thou hast said". The opinion of S. Augustin (*De Consens.*, iii. 7) seems better. He thinks it the same history. For it can hardly be supposed that Christ would have been asked a second time about the same thing when He had answered so emphatically before, "*Tu dixisti*" (verse 64), or, as S. Mark states more clearly (xiv. 62), "I am"; and the high priest understood His meaning so well that he rent his clothes, and said (verse 65), "What further need have we of witnesses?" We may believe, there-

fore, that as S. Matthew has not mentioned the time, S. Luke has done so in the words, "As soon as it was day" (xxii. 66), and that he has anticipated events. And not without reason, for he had begun to relate the examination of Christ in the assembly of the Jews (and that questioning was one examination) that he might continue, in the same narration, the denials of S. Peter.

As to the objection that S. Matthew says that the chief priest asked what S. Luke says all asked (xxii. 66), "If Thou be the Christ, tell us," and that S. Matthew recorded the adjuration, which S. Luke did not, it is of little moment, for either the chief priest asked Christ first, and then all in the assembly repeated the question, or the chief priest asked Him in the name of the rest. S. Luke says that Christ was interrogated by the whole assembly, but he makes no mention of the adjuration; for the Evangelists pass over many things.

Verse 64. *Thou hast said it.*

On this expression see verse 25 and chap. xxvii. 11. Christ used the same words to Pontius Pilate. S. Mark relates (xiv. 62) that Christ answered, *Ego sum*, "I am," the meaning being the same. Hence we see that the words *tu dixisti* do not mean what S. Augustin thinks—"I do not deny," as if He did not assert that He was the Christ. S. Luke (xxii. 67), that Christ said: "If I shall tell you, you will not believe Me". It is probable that Christ was asked the same question twice. The first time simply, and without the adjuration, and that He then answered, in the words of S. Luke, "If I shall tell you," and that the high priest then adjured Him, and He answered what S. Matthew and S. Mark relate: "Thou hast said," or "I am"—a Hebraism. It is probable that He said both.

Christ answered, not merely as much as He was asked, but even more than He was asked; for the question was

one of life or death to Him whether He were the Christ the Son of God, a question which, in that place, it no way became Him either to deny or to dissemble, but rather to confess openly: as He had come into the world for this reason, that, as the Son of God, He might die for the sons of Adam. He added, therefore: "Nevertheless, I say to you that hereafter you shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of the power of God, and coming in the clouds of heaven". The word "Nevertheless" has no term correlative to it, being what is known as *particula adversativa*. It appears to be opposed to words which the Evangelist has not expressed, but left to be understood, and which are found in *S. Luke*: "If I shall tell you, you will not believe Me" (xxii. 67); "nevertheless, I say to you" (*S. Matt.* xxvi. 64), the full meaning of which words is given by *S. Luke* (xxii. 67, 68, 69). As if Christ had said: "What need is there for Me to answer you, since you will not believe. It is better to cause you to believe by facts than words. The time will come hereafter when you shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of the power of God and coming on the clouds of heaven, and, whether you will or not, you will be compelled to believe" (*S. John* xiv. 10, 11). For it was the custom of Christ to refer the unbelieving Jews to His own Resurrection and the Day of Judgment, as chap. xii. 39; xvi. 4; *Apoc.* i. 7.

The word *amodo*, "hereafter," in Greek, ἀπ' ἄρτι, does not mean that they would see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of God immediately after the time when He was speaking. He was speaking of the Day of Judgment, when He would come in the clouds of heaven (xix. 28; xxiv. 3). He here signifies that the Jews shall not see Him from that time: that is, from the time of His death, until they see Him sitting on the right hand of the power of God, and coming on the clouds of heaven: as if He said, *per negationem*, "You shall not see Me as now in the

guise of a criminal, but in that of the Son sitting on the right hand of the power of God, and coming in the clouds of heaven". He therefore tacitly opposes His second coming to His first. But how would they see Him sitting on the right hand of the power of God, as they were not able to see God Himself? They were to see Christ come with so great majesty, that they might easily understand Him to be placed in what may be termed the better part of the Divinity; that is, sitting on the right hand of God and showing most especially His Divinity. "The right hand of the power of God" is a Hebraism for "the powerful right hand of God". How He would come on the clouds has been explained on chaps. xix. 28; xxiv. 30.

*Verse 65. Rent his garments.*

It was the custom of many nations to rend their garments as a sign of grief or indignation, as we find from Homer (*Il.*, xxii. 405), and Virgil (*Æn.*, v. 685; xii. 609). The Jews did so for two reasons above others: (1) in token of grief; as *Gen.* xxxvii. 29, 34; xliv. 13; *Numb.* xiv. 6; *Judges* xi. 35; 1 *Kings* iv. 12; 2 *Kings* i. 11; xiii. 19); and (2) as a witness against blasphemy, as Ezechias, when he heard the blasphemies of the messenger of Sennacherib. The Thalmudists say, as some have observed, that it was a tradition of the Jews to do this on such occasions. They thought it great blasphemy that Christ should call Himself the Son of God, and the high priest therefore cried out that He had blasphemed **כִּיע** for this is the proper meaning of the Hebrew word **כִּיע** and of the Greek *βλασφημεῖν*. The high priest, against all the requirements of justice when he was the judge, acted the part of an advocate, and made the accusers the judges.

*He is guilty of death.*

The Law commanded the blasphemer to be stoned (*Levit.* xxiv. 16). They say here that Christ was guilty of

death for calling Himself the Son of God, and in *S. John* x. 31 they endeavoured to stone Him.

Verse 67. *Then they did spit in His face.*

The word "then" does not mean the precise time when Christ confessed Himself to be the Son of God, and the Jews cried out that He was guilty of death, but rather that before, or, without distinction, the whole night. For it is clear from *S. Luke* xxii. 66 that the question of the high priest and Christ's reply happened when the day was beginning to dawn, and the events now related by *S. Matthew* took place at night, while Christ was kept bound in the house of the chief priest, and Peter denied Him.

*And others struck His face with the palms of their hands.*

*Οὐ δὲ ἐρράπισαν*, struck Him with cudgels or staves, or perhaps with their slippers, which were much used by the Jews for this purpose ; for the word *ράπισ*, whence the verb *ραπίζειν*, means a twig, or club, or slipper. It is probable that, for insult, they smote the face of Christ with the last-named. *S. Mark* and *S. Luke* say that they had first blindfolded Him. *S. John* (xviii. 22) says that one of the bystanders first gave Him a blow, because He had answered the high priest, as in verses 20, 21, as if with too little respect. Christ, however, replied as in verse 23.

Verse 68. *Prophesy unto us.*

Christ was generally considered to be a great Prophet (xxi. 11, 46), and He had confessed that He was the Son of God (verse 64). Then they blinded Him, and asked Him in mockery, "Who is he that struck Thee?" (verse 68). So when He was hanging on the cross, they said : "If He be the King of Israel, let Him now come down from the cross, and we will believe Him" (xxvii. 42).

Verse 69. *But Peter sat without in the court.*

S. John (xviii. 16) explains how Peter entered into the court : " But Peter stood at the door without. The other disciple, therefore, who was known to the high priest, went out and spoke to the portress and brought in Peter." S. Matthew only says that " he followed afar off, even to the court " (verse 58). How he now says that Peter " sat without in the court " is not difficult to be understood. When Peter was in the court he was both within and without : within, because he was in the ambit of the house, and beyond the first door ; without, because he was not in the interior of the house, but in the court and open air, where the soldiers were with the servants of the high priest, the priests, and elders.

*And there came to him a servant maid.*

S. John (xviii. 17) says that she was the portress who opened the door to him. But S. Luke (xxii. 55) and S. Mark (xiv. 67) say that he was warming himself by the fire. Thus, by comparison of the Evangelists, we may conclude that Peter was brought by John into the court of the high priest, and was recognised by the maid servant who had opened the door as he stood with others by the fire. She was silent at first, perhaps, because she was not certain about him, whether he were Peter ; but when she looked at him more attentively and knew him better, she came to him as he sat by the fire and said, " Thou also wast with Jesus the Galilean " (verse 69). She called Him Jesus the Galilean as an insult to Him, as His enemies did ; and because as He lived much in Galilee He was perhaps thought to be a Galilean ; and because almost all His disciples were of Galilee (S. John vii. 41). So Julian the Apostate called Christ and all Christians Galileans (Socrates, *Hist.*, iii. 12). It is not said by S. John (xviii. 17) that the maid said to Peter, " Thou also," but that she asked

him, "Art not thou also one?" But S. Luke (xxii. 56) says, "When a certain servant maid had seen him sitting at the light, and had earnestly beheld him, she said, This man also was with Him". We must believe, therefore, that she said all these words. First, as doubtful, "Art not thou also one of this man's disciples?" as S. John says. Then she spoke positively, "Thou also wast with Jesus the Galilean" (S. *Matt.* v. 69); and lastly, she turned to the bystanders and said, "This man also was with Him" (S. *Luke* xxii. 56).

Verse 70. *But he denied before them all, saying, I know not what thou sayest.*

S. Matthew says that the denial was made before all the people present, either as a fact that increased the gravity of the offence, or to show the truth of his account, that he might not be suspected of having accused the chief of the Apostles falsely, adducing all who were present as witnesses. The words of S. Peter, "I know not what thou sayest," have a force of certain denial, as if he had said, "I am not only not what thou sayest, but so far from it that I do not know of what thou art speaking"; as is our own custom in such cases. S. John says that Peter answered, "I am not"; S. Luke, "I know Him not"; S. Mark, "I neither know nor understand what thou sayest". It may be believed that this was said by Peter, *exaggerandi causa*. 1. Simply "I am not," as related by S. John when the maid servant asked him doubtfully, "Art not thou also one of this man's disciples?" 2. When she persisted and stated with an affirmation what S. Matthew relates, and Peter answered, "I neither know nor understand what thou sayest," as S. Matthew, S. Mark, and S. Luke say.

Verse 71. *And as he went out of the gate.*

Ἐξελθόντα δὲ αὐτὸν εἰς τὸν πυλῶνα, *egressum autem eum in vestibulum*. S. Mark says, "He went forth before the

court, and the cock crew" (xiv. 68), which has the same meaning. S. Peter then went into the vestibule which was before the court, as is usually the case in houses of note, and S. Mark says that immediately the cock crew. For he alone says, "Before the cock crow twice" (xiv. 30).

From this it would seem to have been about the middle of the night, for it is then that cocks crow for the first time. But S. John says, that this second denial of Peter was made when he was warming himself at the fire. So that, probably, as soon as he had denied the first time—perhaps because he was vexed by the bystanders at being taken for the disciple of Christ, or for some other reason—he went from the court to the vestibule; and then, to dissemble, and that his departure might not bring confirmation of the truth of the charge, he returned to the fire, and, as related by S. Luke, "After a little while he denied again" (xxii. 58). These words of S. Luke must, necessarily, contain at least three hours, because he says that between the second and third denial there was the space of one hour (xxii. 59), and all the Evangelists say that immediately after the third denial the cock crew. Hence this third denial probably took place about the fourth hour of the morning, that is, a little before dawn when the cocks crow. For it was the equinox, so that from the middle of the night, the time of the first denial, to sunrise, would be six hours. It is probable, therefore, that the second crowing happened at the fourth hour of the morning, and as there was one hour between the second and third denial it follows that the second happened about the third hour, and that about three hours intervened between the first and second denial.

From S. John we learn how the words of S. Matthew, "As he went out," ἐξελθόντα, are to be taken; that is, "After he had gone out" (that the words of S. John may be understood) and returned to the fire; for when he had



gone into the vestibule the other maid-servant saw and recognised him, as when he came into the court the portress had done. The servant, therefore, who had seen Peter when he went out, came when he had returned to the fire and said to those who were present, "This man also was with Jesus of Nazareth" (S. Matt. xxvi. 71). S. Luke does not say that it was a maid-servant. His words rather seem to imply that it was a man (xxii. 58). S. Mark speaks as if it were the same maid-servant as had questioned S. Peter before—καὶ ἡ παιδίσκη ἰδοῦσα αὐτὸν πάλιν ἤρξατο λέγειν τοῖς παρεστηκόσιν, *rursum autem, cum vidisset eum ancilla cœpit dicere circumstantibus*. S. John says that many questioned S. Peter at this second denial (xviii. 25).

Some, unable to harmonise these sayings with one another, have been led, audaciously as may be said, to assert erroneously that S. Peter denied Christ more than three times. Some even say that he did so seven. Christ forewarned him that he should deny Him, not four times, nor five, nor seven, but three only. Christ would have said that he would do so more often if it had been the truth, since, as has been shown, Christ desired to dwell with emphasis on Peter's fears and inconsistency. Hence, according to S. Mark, He said, "Amen, I say to thee to-day, even in this night, before the cock crow twice, thou shalt deny Me thrice" (xiv. 30). All the Evangelists have mentioned three denials, none any more. This would, indeed, have been wonderful if he had uttered more denials than three. Again, all have observed that after the third the cock crew, as if to make an end of them. Peter, warned by the sound, remembered the words of the Lord, and redeemed his fault by his bitter weeping. We are not to exaggerate S. Peter's fault, though, from their hatred of the Apostle, it is the custom of the heretics to do so.

The wonder rather is that these persons, on such slight grounds, and in a question of grave significance, have

both set themselves in opposition to the testimony at once of the Evangelists and of Christ, and gone away from the tradition of the whole Church of all ages. Their opinion is :

1. That S. John says that the first denial took place in the house of Annas. The other Evangelists say that the three denials were made in that of Caiaphas. We have said that that first denial described by S. John and the others, which he relates in the same place, were uttered, not in the house of Annas, but of Caiaphas.

2. S. Mark seems to say that S. Peter, when questioned by the same maid-servant, denied again, as said before. If so, as S. Matthew says clearly that it was another servant, the denials are different ones. But S. Mark neither states nor implies that it was the same, for, when he says, ἡ παιδίσκη, the article is not to be taken relatively as referring to the portress whom he had mentioned before ; and when he says, πάλιν, "again," he does not imply that S. Peter was asked a second time by the same maid-servant, but by some one; that is, by some other, as he had been previously by the portress. This is stated in plain terms by S. Matthew.

3. The third conjecture carries no more weight. That S. Luke seems to say that S. Peter denied when asked, not by the maid-servant, but by some man. For when he said (verse 58), "Another, seeing him, said, Thou also art one of them, Peter answered: O man, I am not". As S. Luke, therefore, did not know, or would not say whether it were a man or woman who asked Peter the second time, he said generally "some one"; that is, ἄνθρωπος, *homo*, which may express an individual of either sex. Which of the two it was must be ascertained from S. Matthew and S. Mark. They distinctly say that it was a woman.

4. The fourth conjecture is that S. John, as said before, describing the two denials, says that Peter was asked by

many whether he were not also one of the disciples. When, therefore, besides the three denials mentioned by S. Matthew, they seem to find four other denials—(1) mentioned by S. John, in the house of Annas ; (2) also mentioned by S. John, when Peter was questioned by many ; (3) by S. Mark, when Peter was questioned by the maid-servant ; (4) by S. Luke, when he was questioned by some man—they conclude that there were seven denials. We have answered the other three : there remains one to be answered. They conclude this from the second passage of S. John, but it can be answered with much less pains. (1) S. John does not say that many questioned S. Peter, he only says, εἶπον οὖν αὐτῷ, “they said to him” ; that is, it was said to him. This is a Hebraism. It expresses the verb impersonal by the third person plural without a subject, as “they love,” *amant* ; that is, *amatur*. This is true although done only by one, as they say in Latin, *perhibent, ferunt, dicunt*, for *perhibetur, fertur, dicitur*. Although, therefore, only one maid-servant said to S. Peter, “Art not thou also one of His disciples?” S. John could truly say, “They said, then, to him”. Hence it is credible that (1) the maid-servant said, “Art not thou also one of this man’s disciples?” and, (2) that they who were present took up the question. But it must not be supposed that these were, therefore, different denials.

*This man also was with Jesus of Nazareth.*

S. Mark says that the maid-servant said to the bystanders, “This is one of them” ; S. Luke, “Thou also art one of them” ; S. John, “Art not thou also one of His disciples?” We must believe that the maid-servant said all these words. First, “Art not thou also one of His disciples?” as S. John says, and when Peter denied it, she said with an affirmation, “Thou also art one of them,” as S. Luke says ; then that she turned to the bystanders and said, “This is one of

them," as S. Mark says; and "This man also was with Jesus of Nazareth," as S. Matthew says.

Verse 72. *And again he denied, with an oath.*

Peter increased his offence. The first time he did not swear, but only denied; now he both denies and swears. S. Luke writes that he said, "O man, I am not"; S. John, "I am not". It is credible that at first he merely said, "I am not," as S. John says. Then, when either the maid-servant or they who were present pressed him, he added, as in S. Luke, "O man, I am not"; and lastly, when they urged him again, he exclaimed: "I know not the Man," as S. Matthew says.

Verse 73. *And after a little while.*

S. Luke (xxii. 59) says that it was "after the space, as it were, of one hour".

*While they came that stood by.*

S. Mark says the same; but S. Luke, "Another seeing him said, Thou also art one of them". S. John says that this was a kinsman of him whose ear Peter cut off, and who affirmed that he had seen Peter in the garden with Christ. The servant of the high priest probably commenced the enquiry and the others followed.

*For even thy speech doth discover thee.*

S. Mark and S. Luke say, "For he is also a Galilean". How a Galilean, when using the Hebrew language, could be recognised to be such has been explained by S. Jerome: "Each province and country has its own peculiarities, and among them a vernacular style of speech, which it cannot escape. As we see that the men of Ephraim were unable to pronounce the word "Schibboleth" like the rest of the

Jews, but said "Sibboleth" instead, which caused the destruction of many (*Judges* xii. 6).

Verse 74. *Then began he to curse.*

*Καταναθεματίζειν, Execrari.* This may refer either to Christ or to Peter, and may mean that he either cursed Christ or himself. As there is no certainty it will be right to take the words in the better sense, and to believe that Peter cursed himself — that is, devoted himself to the Furies, *diris*, as the Latins say, which was an execrable oath.

*And to swear that he knew not the Man.*

The fault still increased with the temptation. Peter said, in his first denial, "I am not"; in his second, "I know not the Man"; and in his third "I know not what thou sayest". In the second he uttered an oath, in the third an execration, which he probably uttered more than once, as the expression, "he began to curse and to swear," would seem to imply. S. Matthew says that Peter began to curse and to swear (verse 74). S. Luke and S. John merely say that he denied, omitting this circumstance.

*And immediately the cock crew.*

S. Luke says, "immediately, as he was yet speaking". This minute account, so carefully expressed, shows that Christ's words (verse 34) were true. All the Evangelists have related the same circumstance with the same design, but S. Luke the most fully.

Verse 75. *And Peter remembered the words of Jesus.*

It is strange that Peter did not remember them sooner, for previously, at midnight, before his first denial, the cock had crowed. Perhaps Peter had not heard it; or, because it only crowed once, he may have hoped that he might not

deny a second time ; or, most probably of all, he was moved by Christ's look, as S. Luke (xxii. 61) signifies. So say S. Chrysostom (*in loc.*), S. Ambrose (lib. x., *Comment. in S. Luke*), S. Leo (*Serm. iii. de Pass. Dom.*). In these denials of S. Peter there are three things to be observed.

1. The events described by S. Matthew did not all happen after, nor all before, the time at which he places them; for one part which he put before happened when the day had dawned: as the question put to Christ by the high priest, whether He were the Christ or not (*S. Luke* xxii. 66); for it is very clear that the three denials were uttered at different times of the night.

S. Matthew and S. Mark, therefore, because they had begun to relate what had been done to Christ that night, desired to conclude all that history before they began to relate the denials of Peter. They therefore place these together at the end of their account.

S. Luke, on the other hand, had begun with describing the denials. He therefore related these before describing what was done to Christ. S. John alone unites into one the denials of Peter and the history of Christ.

2. We must beware of the error of those who think that S. Peter lost his faith. He did not lose it, but he did deny, as Prudentius says in his *Cathemerin* (hymn i.) :

"Flevit negator denique,  
Ex ore prolapsus nefas,  
Cum mens maneret innocens,  
Animusque servaret fidem".

Though the denier's conscience slept  
Awhile, yet now at length he wept  
The wickedness from him which 'scap'd,  
And mourn'd the sin his lips had shap'd;  
For innocent his mind remain'd,  
And still his soul its faith retain'd.

3. The opposite error must also be avoided. That, when he denied Christ, Peter either did not sin, or at least did not

utter a falsehood, but, keeping the truth, spoke ambiguously. S. Hilary and S. Ambrose say this. They say that Peter did not lie when he said that He knew not Christ as man, whom he did know as God. S. Jerome, perhaps, alludes to them when he says: "I know that some, from their love for the Apostle Peter, explain this passage to mean that Peter did not deny God, but man, and that his meaning was, 'I know not Him as man whom I know as God'". Everyone of any sense can see at once how frivolous this is. To defend the Apostle thus is to make God the author of lies. For, if Peter did not deny Christ, the Lord spoke falsely when He said, "Amen, I say to thee that in this night, before the cock crow, thou shalt deny Me thrice". Observe what Christ said: "Thou shalt deny Me"; not, "Thou shalt deny a man". We may, however, acquit S. Hilary and S. Ambrose of error by a charitable explanation, that they do not deny that Peter denied and sinned; they only say that he spoke so that a true meaning can be elicited from his words, "I know not the man," which we may explain to mean, "I do not know Christ only as man, but also as God".

*And going forth, he wept bitterly.*

Peter, as S. Jerome and Bede say, was not able to do penance in the court of the house of the high priest, but he must go out. He would, indeed, have acted with more constancy and courage if he had performed it in the same place as that in which he committed the offence; and if he had confessed Christ before those to whom he had denied Him, and had thus repaired the mischief of that denial. But we are so constituted by nature, that we are ashamed to do penance, where we are not ashamed to commit the offence. Though Peter went out of the house not so much perhaps from infirmity, as from reverence for Christ, being unable to bear the look of Him whom he had denied.

However this may be, he showed a great example of penitence. S. Ambrose well says in his *Commentary on S. Luke*, "Even the fall of the saint is useful. Peter's denial does me no harm; his self-correction profits me. I have learnt to mistrust the promises of the faithless. Peter denied among the Jews. Solomon erred among Gentile associates. Peter wept bitterly that he might wash out his fault by his tears"; and as we read in S. Clement of Rome, "The pain of his fault was so deeply rooted in his mind, that all his life, whenever he heard a cock crow, he fell on his knees, and sought pardon for his offence with tears".



## CHAPTER XXVII.

### THE CONTINUATION OF THE HISTORY OF THE PASSION OF CHRIST—HIS DEATH AND BURIAL.

Verse 1. *And when morning was come.*

S. Mark says, "Straightway in the morning"; S. Luke, "As soon as it was day".

*Took counsel.*

S. Luke says, "Came together," *convenerunt* (xxii. 66). It is probable that the first council was dissolved; for it is not likely that the priests, scribes, and elders, however great their rage against Christ, would have remained in assembly without any repose through the whole night. The events related by S. Matthew (verses 62, 67, of the last chapter) took place in this morning's council. This is clear from S. Luke also, whose account has been shown to be the same as that of S. Matthew.

*All the chief priests and ancients of the people.*

S. Mark and S. Luke add "Scribes"; these three classes, as has been said more than once, forming a Jewish council. On the number of chief priests, see chap. ii. 4.

*That they might put Him to death.*

Had they not just said, "He is guilty of death"? (xxvi. 66). We have said that these words were spoken in this place and in this council; but S. Matthew said as a summary, "They took counsel," because, having interposed the account of Peter's denials, he had broken off the thread

of the history. The false testimony did not seem to them sufficient for Christ's condemnation to death, as S. Mark implies (xiv. 56); and, therefore, when the day began to dawn, and they had no sufficient reason for bringing Him before Pilate, they assembled the council again to deliberate as to what they could accuse Him of to the governor that would be thought to deserve death. They, therefore, asked Him whether He were the Christ, as S. Matthew says (xxvi. 63); for they knew that He would not deny this, and it might seem a capital offence to the governor; because it was the opinion of all Jews that Christ would be a king and deliver them from the Roman yoke, and whoever called himself Christ professed to be a king—of all things the most criminal in the eyes of the usurping Romans.

*Verse 2. And they brought Him bound.*

*Καὶ δέσαντες αὐτόν, Et cum eum vinxisset,* as S. Mark says (xv. 1). S. John (xviii. 12) says that Christ had been bound before when He was seized: but He had either been loosed in the house of the chief priest, whence they thought that He could not escape, or His hands were not manacled. When they brought Him from the house of Caiaphas to that of Pilate, they bound Him again.

*And delivered Him to Pontius Pilate, the governor.*

It may be asked why they gave Him over to the governor, and did not kill Him themselves, *sive jure sive rabie*. S. Chrysostom thinks that they delivered Him to Pilate because it was a feast day, on which it was not lawful to put anyone to death. But (xxvi. 2) it has been shown that it was not such. Theophylact thinks that they delivered Him up to Pilate because they accused Him of laying claim to the kingdom, which would greatly concern Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor. S. John states the

true reason. It was not lawful for them to put any man to death (xviii. 31); whether this were absolutely forbidden by the Romans, as almost all ancient writers think: or, as some say, it was not lawful for them to crucify, but they must either stone, strangle, burn, or slay with the sword (as described in chap. v. 22): the cross was a punishment introduced into Judæa by the Romans, and the Jews desired to crucify Christ, this being of all deaths the most ignominious.

It will be urged in objection that Stephen (*Acts* vii. 58) was stoned, and, therefore, that all capital punishment was not taken from the Jews. The obvious answer is that that manner of death was not forbidden them, because they endeavoured to stone Christ Himself on other occasions, as related by S. John (x. 31). But if, as is most likely, all capital punishment was taken from them, it must be repeated that they stoned Stephen, and endeavoured to stone Christ, not according to law, but by impulse.

How Pontius Pilate was made governor has been related by Josephus. We have said (xiv. 1) that the kingdom of Herod the Great was divided, after his death, into tetrarchies, as S. Luke says (iii. 1). Judæa was one of these. Archelaus, the son of Herod the Great, ruled over it for ten years, partly as a tetrarch and partly as a king. At the end of that time he was accused, before the Emperor Augustus, of having slaughtered 3000 Jews who had fled into the Temple on the day of Pasch, and of having practised tyranny against the Jews and disposed of the priesthood, setting up some and depriving others as he pleased. He was banished to Vienne in Gaul, as Josephus informs us (*Antiq.*, xvii. 19; xviii. 1). Judæa was then reduced to a Roman province, governed by procurators like other provinces. Pontius Pilate was the sixth procurator (Josephus, *Antiq.*, xviii. 4). Theophylact thinks that he was called Pontius as having been a native of Pontus. But this does

not seem a reason of much weight, as there were others of the name at Rome.

Verse 3. *Then Judas, who betrayed Him, seeing that He was condemned.*

The meaning of this passage is no doubt that Judas, seeing Christ condemned by the Jews, who all cried out with one voice, "He is guilty of death," and dragged before Pilate—an act which they would not have committed had they not resolved to persevere until He was condemned to the cross—brought back the thirty pieces of silver. The chief priests are said to have delivered Christ to death, because it was they who gave Him over to Pilate with that intent (*S. Luke xxiv. 20*).

From this it has been concluded that Judas, when he betrayed Christ, did not do so with the object of His being put to death, nor with any expectation that such would be the result. This is the opinion of Theophylact and others. In this he was in some slight degree better than the priests, scribes, and elders, because, although he sold his Master from avarice and unbelief, he had no thought of His being put to death.

### *Repenting himself.*

Origen and S. Jerome speak of the repentance of Judas in such a manner as to appear even to praise him. They refute the error of the Manichæans, who say that we have two natures—a good and a bad. They do not understand, I think, that that of Judas was not wholly good (*bonam omnino*, folio and 8vo, but query *malam*), but had some particle of good in it, for, although he did not amend the sin, yet he felt it, confessed it, and grieved for having committed it. The Greek word S. Matthew uses, *μεταμεληθεῖς*, means to grieve for sin, and to be troubled at it. It differs from *μετανοεῖν*, as it means to acknowledge a sin

and to grieve for it. *Μετανοεῖν* means this, and also to atone for it. S. Peter did the latter and Judas the former. He is not described, therefore, as *μετανοηθείς* or *μετανοῶν*, but *μεταμεληθείς*. S. Leo (*Serm. v. de Pass. Dom.*) says, "Justly, and as the Prophet had foretold, 'His prayer was turned to sin' (*Ps. cviii. 7*); for, when he had consummated his crime, the conversion of the wicked man was so perverse that even in his repentance he committed sin". And S. Ambrose, in his *Comment. on S. Luke*, bk. x.: "Although the repentance of the traitor was vain, because he sinned against the Holy Ghost, he had still some shame in acknowledging his deed. Although he is not absolved, the malice of the Jews is confuted, for when the confession of the traitor had convicted them, they still claimed the right of the wicked contract, and considered themselves free from blame by saying, 'What is that to us? see thou to it'. They were plainly senseless to suppose that they were absolved from the wickedness of Judas rather than bound by it."

Origen and Theophylact say that it was the wish of Judas, when he could not prevent the death of Christ, to die, himself, before Him that he might meet Him in the other life, and there seek forgiveness for his iniquity. This partakes much of the nature of fable, but it has at least the good of proving that, in the time of Origen, the doctrine of purgatory and of the remission of sins after this life was well known.

Verse 4. *I have sinned in betraying innocent blood.*

Innocent blood; that is, a just man to death. Judas did not believe Christ to be God, but he confessed Him to be a just man, and innocent. God chose that Christ should have the testimony of every class against the wickedness of the priests and elders; even that of His judge Pilate, of Pilate's wife, and of His betrayer who had sold Him.

*What is that to us?*

These, as S. Ambrose says, are the words of men blinded and "who thought that they were absolved by the wickedness of the agent, rather than bound by it. In pecuniary affairs," he continues, "if the price is refused the obligation is at an end. These priests accept the terms, and follow up their sacrilege, pertinaciously claiming for themselves the mortal sin of bloodshed, when the trafficker would have refunded the price of his crime."

Verse 5. *And cast down the pieces of silver in the Temple.*

Judas by this act appeared to himself to give it to the priests, and so to rescind his bargain with them.

*He departed, and went and hanged himself with a halter.*

Ἀπήγξατο, *Laqueo præfocatus est.* S. Peter says (*Acts* i. 18): "being hanged, he burst asunder in the midst, and all his bowels gushed out," καὶ πρηνὴς γενόμενος ἐλάκῃσε μέσος, *et præceps factus crepuit medius.* This does not appear to agree with S. Matthew. Some say that Judas first hanged himself, as S. Matthew says, but that the tree bent, and he thus survived; but afterwards died of a dropsy and burst asunder in the midst, as S. Peter says. This is the opinion of Theophylact. Others (*e.g.*, Euthymius) say, that while he was hanging he was recognised by the passers-by and cut down, and lived some time after in secrecy, falling at last from that lofty spot, and, being swollen, burst asunder. Others say that the halter broke and he fell, and so burst asunder. Æcumenius says this (*Comment. Acts Apost.*, i.) from Papias—a very ancient authority.

More probably, as some others think, he first threw himself down from some lofty spot to die the more quickly, and afterwards, either from the breaking of the rope, he fell down and his bowels gushed out, or he became so swollen that after a time he burst in two; for all who are hanged swell much. It is doubtful whether he hanged

himself immediately on returning the money. Some say that he did not do so until after the Resurrection of Christ, and that when he heard of this he lost all hope of salvation, because he had sold the Saviour of the world; and he then went out and hanged himself. But this is uncertain and has no proof. The Evangelist says that he threw down the pieces of silver, and immediately went out and hanged himself. This seems more probable.

Maldonatus enters into the curious and confessedly useless question as to what tree, if any, Judas hanged himself from. He thinks, from tradition, that it was most probably a fig-tree, this having been the tree from which Adam and Eve ate the forbidden fruit. He cites the lines of Juvenecus to this effect :

“ Exorsusque, suas laqueo sibi sumere pœnas,  
Informem rapuit ficus de vertice mortem ”.

He having by the noose begun  
Himself a punishment to give,  
A shameful death he did not shun,  
But from the fig-tree's top he ceased to live.

Verse 6. *But the chief priests having taken the pieces of silver.*

Why did the chief priests accept this money now, which they had such a short time before refused? Because Judas then gave it back as if he would have undone his own act. They would not receive it, therefore, lest they should appear to annul their compact, and be compelled to give up Christ to him, as he had given back the money. They took it now because he cast it into the Temple, and what was cast into the Temple was considered to be offered to the Temple and to God. As the priests used to accept these offerings, they now took the thirty pieces of silver also.

*It is not lawful to put them into the Corbona.*

הקריב in Hebrew is “to offer”. Hence the word קרבן which properly means an oblation, and is frequently found

in Scripture (*Levit.* i. 2, 3; ii. 5, 7; vi. 20; *Numb.* vii. 13; xxviii. 2). It is sometimes used for "an oath," which was made by קרבן that is, the offerings of the Temple by which the Jews sometimes swore: as in *S. Matt.* xxiii. 16, 18. Josephus (i., *Cont. Apion.*) is our authority. This is perhaps the meaning of *S. Mark* vii. 11. The word was then made to apply to the place where the treasures of the Temple were kept, that is, the sacred treasury (Josephus, *Bell. Jud.*, ii. 8). The Greeks use the word γαζοφυλάκιον (*4 Kings* xii. 9, 10; *S. Mark* xii. 41, 43; *S. Luke* xxii. 1; *S. John* viii. 20). Some understand *mittere* to mean *remittere*, "to put back," thinking that the thirty pieces of silver were taken out of the treasury by the priests to buy Christ. Juvenus was of this opinion, and it has much probability. For public costs, pertaining to the Temple and religion, were defrayed from the sacred funds. The priests thought the murder of Christ, who called Himself the Son of God, a case of this kind.

*Because it is the price of blood.*

Blood is here used by a Hebraism for death. They ought to have added "of a just man," as even Judas had done, but men who are blinded by error know not how either to think or speak the truth. The Jews were forbidden to offer any wicked gain in the Temple (*Deut.* xxiii. 18). Hence they decided by analogy not to offer the price of blood to God (verse 6); nor, which was greater foolishness still, to put it into the treasury. When they took the silver pieces, they accepted them as an oblation made to God, thus, like madmen, judging that more reverence was to be paid to the treasury than to God.

*Verse 7. And after they had consulted together.*

It is not probable that this took place immediately, but after Christ was crucified, and perhaps after the day of



Pasch. For they were occupied all that day in His accusation and crucifixion, and on the day following in the Passover, when it was not lawful to engage in any business. But S. Matthew, having begun to describe Judas' restoration of the thirty pieces, concluded the entire history and showed what was done about them. His account of the consultation and purchase of the field must be looked upon as related by anticipation.

*They bought with them the potter's field.*

It is uncertain why S. Matthew calls it the potter's field. It might be because it belonged to some particular potter: or because potters dug earth from it to make their vessels: or that they threw the broken fragments upon it so as to make it useless for cultivation, and fit only for a burial-place. However this be, it is certain that the field was commonly known by this name, both because the Evangelists speak of it as a spot well known, and because the Greek describes it with the article τὸν ἀγρόν, which shows that it was well known.

*To be a burying-place for strangers.*

The inhabitants of Jerusalem were accustomed to bury their dead either in some public place, or each on his own land, where he had a burying-place, in which all of the same family were interred. They thought it a great consolation in death to be buried in the tombs of their fathers, as is clear from many passages in the Books of Kings. But strangers, having no burial-place in the city, found sepulture a matter of difficulty. On this public good those holy chiefs of the priests expended the money brought to the Temple: for an offering could not be thought sacred to God unless expended on some pious work. This is the interpretation of Origen. Others think that the strangers here referred to were the Gentiles, who sometimes took up

their abode in the city, or frequently visited it, but who, if they died in it, had no burying place ; for all consorting of Jews with Gentiles was unlawful, not only in life but even after death.

Verse 8. *For this cause the field was called Aceldama, that is, the field of blood, even to this day.*

It was surely of the divine counsel that the means used by them to cover and, as it were, bury their wickedness, carried it down, by an enduring monument, to all posterity. So that whenever *Aceldama*, that field of blood, was mentioned, their wickedness, as S. Chrysostom and Euthymius have observed, should be called to mind. *Aceldama* is a Syriac word. The Jews then used this language. It means the "field of blood," so called as having been bought by the price of blood. The word is not used by S. Matthew, but its Greek equivalent, the "field of blood". Nor does S. Chrysostom (*in loc.*), or Eusebius (*Demons.*, x. 4), when referring to this passage, make use of it. It has been thought, with some probability, that the word has crept into this text from *Acts* i. 19, where it is used by S. Peter.

Verse 9. *Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremias the Prophet.*

It is an ancient and weighty question, how S. Matthew cites these as the words of Jeremias, when they are not such, but are those of Zacharias (xi. 13). Much labour has been bestowed upon the point.

1. Some think that they are really Jeremias', but taken by S. Matthew from some lost work of his. For it is plain from the Books of *Kings* and *Paralipomenon* that other Prophets, and Jeremias most especially by name, wrote other books than those we have. We read this in 2 *Macchab.* ii. 1.

2. It has been thought these words were written by Jeremias, and in the book which we have of his, but that they were subsequently removed from the text by the malevolence of the Jews. Eusebius holds this opinion (*Demons.*, x. 4).

3. Another opinion is that they are taken from some apocryphal writings of Jeremias, for even the Apostles themselves sometimes make citations from such works, as S. Paul (2 *Tim.* iii. 8) speaks of Jannes and Jambres, from, probably, some apocryphal work. Origen thought this, and S. Jerome seems to confirm it, by saying that a certain Jew once gave him an apocryphal book of Jeremias, in which this citation was found to the letter.

4. Others suppose it to have been a lapse of memory in the Evangelist, and that when the name of Jeremias occurred to him, instead of Zacharias, he wrote it: but that he either discovered the mistake himself subsequently, or some reader of his gospel pointed it out to him, and he would not correct it because he believed it to be the work of the Holy Spirit, who spoke the same things by the mouths of all the Prophets; and that it could not matter what was said by which Prophet, for the words of all were common, so that what is spoken by one may be considered to have been spoken by all. This is the opinion of S. Augustin and Bede, but it is wholly untenable.

For although some learned men and Catholic authors have said that the Evangelists sometimes commit errors of memory, and that the authority of Scripture is nowise lessened thereby, it cannot be seen how, with the dictation of the Holy Ghost, and the maintenance of the faith of the Scriptures—which ought always to be the highest and firmest possible—this could have happened. To say that Jeremias could have been cited for Zacharias because the same Holy Spirit says the same thing by all the Prophets,

appears to me to do violence to the inspiration of the sacred text.

5. Origen and Eusebius say, and without disapprobation, that Jeremias was inserted into the text by mistake from its resemblance to the word Zacharias. But there is no such resemblance. Some are of opinion that Zacharias had two names, and was sometimes called Jeremias; but this requires proof. Others, with the approbation of S. Augustin, suppose that Jeremias was really intended, and that the reference is to chap. xxxii. 9 and his purchase of the field. But there is nothing in common between this and the citation from Jeremias except the allusion to the field—nothing of the “potter” or of the “price” of him that was prized, whom they prized of the children of Israel. Nor did Jeremias buy a field for thirty pieces of silver, but for seventeen—ten pieces of silver and seven staters.

Some say that a prophecy of Jeremias was intended—not one in his written works, but one received from tradition, as the passage in *S. Luke* where Christ spoke of the tower of Siloe (xiii. 4). This, if nothing better could be offered, might be received as possible.

6. The best opinion seems to be that of those who say that the Evangelist mentioned the name of no Prophet at all, but merely said, “Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by the Prophet,” as in many other instances (i. 22; ii. 5, 15, 23; xiii. 35; xxi. 4; 35 of this chapter), and that some transcriber, thinking the words to be those of Jeremias, inserted his name in the margin, and some one else placed it in the text. In confirmation of this—(1) the Syriac version of this Gospel does not contain the name of Jeremias at all, and (2) S. Augustin (*De Cons.*, iii. 7) says that in his time the word was not found in several Latin copies. Against this opinion, S. Augustin argues that there was no reason why the name of Jeremias should be

added : but there was this one why it should rather have been erased, that Jeremias might be thought to be cited wrongly. It is strange, as he says in the same place that there was sufficient reason for giving this prophecy to Jeremias, because he bought a field (xxxii. 9), that he now denies that that reason was sufficient for one who thought that the Evangelist alluded to Jeremias, to have inserted his name in the margin, and another to have transferred it to the text.

There may be another reason for ascribing the passage to Jeremias. The words of Zacharias in the LXX. differ so widely from the truth of the Hebrew as to have no resemblance whatever to it ; so that they could not be recognised by the Greek readers, who, in all probability, added the name of Jeremias. As regards the meaning of the passage, the Evangelist, in accordance with his frequent practice, describes neither word nor person, being content to give the meaning and, as he desired, to show the fulfilment of the prophecy.

*And they took the thirty pieces of silver.*

ואקחה שלשים הכסף. "And I took" (*accepti*). The Prophet spoke in the first person to show that he had performed what the Lord commanded. The Evangelist, with the same meaning, has rendered the words in the third person, to show that the whole was fulfilled by the priests, whom in this the Prophet represented ; although ἑλαβον in Greek may be the first person singular.

*The price of him that was prized.*

Τὴν τιμὴν τοῦ τετιμημένου אדר היקר. This was called a little before by the Prophet in other words, דעס היקר *decus pretii* or *pretium æstimationis*. The Evangelist appears not to have read יקרה *pretii* or *æstimationis*, but יקר *æstimati*, τετιμημένου, which the Latin renders *appretiati*.

*Whom they prized of the children of Israel.*

“Οὐ ἐτιμήσαντο ἀπὸ υἱῶν Ἰσραήλ, אשר יקרתי מעליהם, “by which I was prized by them”. The Evangelist has changed the first person singular into the third person plural, and the passive into the active voice, but has kept the same meaning. Whom they prized *a filiis Israel*, that is, *qui ex filiis*. The relative οὗ is to be understood like the Hebrew אשר as I have shown in my work, *Idiom. Hebræ*. A similar example is found in *Judith* viii. 17.

Verse 10. *And they gave them unto the potter's field, as the Lord appointed me.*

Καὶ ἔδωκαν αὐτὰ εἰς τὸν ἀγρὸν τοῦ κεραμέως, ואשלך וחסלך אל יהוה בית אתו “And I cast them (the silver or the price) into the house of the Lord to the statuary”. That is, that from them a field might be bought, *a figulo*, as the Evangelist (*optimus interpres*) has expressed it.

Thus, Rabbi David Kimshi and other expositors of this passage of Zacharias are not to be trusted, who think that יוצר *figulam*, “potter,” was written for חצר by the change of the letter ח *thesaurus*, “treasure,” that the meaning may be, “I cast it into the house of the Lord,” to the treasure, or to the treasury ; that is, that it might be laid up among the sacred treasures. If in the Greek of the Evangelist we read ἔδωκα, *dedi* (I gave), for ἔδωκαν, *dederunt* (they gave), the Greek will agree with the Hebrew. There is no mention of the word *agri* (field) in the Prophet, but as it is contained in a manner in the word *figuli*, “potter” (the meaning as we have said, being “I cast it to the potter,” that is, that the field might be bought by the potter), the Evangelist, as explaining the Prophet, expressed it, εἰς τὸν ἀγρὸν τοῦ κεραμέως, *in agrum figuli*, unto the potter's field.

*As the Lord appointed me.*

These words are not found in the Prophet, but the sense and the fact are. It was said by the Prophet that the Lord commanded him to cast the thirty pieces of silver to the statuary, that is, the potter. He subsequently says that he did so, and thus fulfilled the command of the Lord. The Prophet himself did not say this in words, but he said it in fact, by doing it. S. Matthew explained the whole to teach us that it was done, not by accident, nor by the will of man, but by the command of God. Hence the priests bought the potter's field for the thirty pieces of silver by the providence and impulse of God.

*Verse 11. And Jesus stood before the governor.*

S. John (xviii. 28) says that Christ was brought to the governor's hall. But the Jews themselves did not venture to enter, lest they should be defiled, and that they might be able to eat the Pasch. Pilate went out to them, therefore, and asked them: "What accusation bring you against this man?" These words were spoken as if intended to show that Pilate himself thought Jesus innocent. As if he had said: "What offence can be brought against this just man?" The Jews, as if the question had done them some injustice, replied (verse 30): "If He were not a malefactor we would not have delivered Him up to thee". After these words should be placed those of S. Luke (xxiii. 2): "And they began to accuse Him, saying, We found this man perverting our nation, and forbidding to give tribute to Cæsar, and saying that He is Christ the King". Then follows S. John (xviii. 31): "Pilate therefore said to them, Take Him you, and judge Him according to your law". It appears that the governor tried every means possible to avoid judging Christ.

The Jews, therefore, said to him: "It is not lawful for us to put any man to death". S. John adds: "That the word of Jesus might be fulfilled which He said signifying what death He should die"—referring to *S. Matthew* xx. 18, 19. S. John intimates that the Jews would not use the power given to them by the governor (xviii. 31): "Take Him you and judge Him according to your law," because it was not lawful for them to crucify anyone. And this was the death they especially designed for Christ, and that by which Christ had foretold that He should die. Or they may have supposed that Pilate spoke ironically. S. John signifies that it was not from the virtue of the Jews, but rather from their cruelty, and from the divine counsel by which it was decreed that Christ should be crucified, that the Jews would not judge Him by their law.

After these things, as S. John says, the governor entered into the hall, and while the Jews stood without, called Christ to him, and asked Him, in the words of S. Matthew and S. John, "Art Thou the king of the Jews?" The governor asked, then, only of the kingship and tribute, the latter being contained in the former. If Christ were a king, He would undoubtedly refuse tribute to Cæsar. For the Jews raised these two objections amongst others, which they thought likely to influence Pilate: (1) That He made Himself a king; and (2) that He taught that it was unlawful to give tribute to Cæsar. These accusations could be answered even by their own evidence; for when they asked Him whether it were lawful to give tribute to Cæsar, He answered: "Render to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and to God the things that are God's" (xxii. 21). There were also Roman witnesses, and Jewish publicans, who could testify that Christ not only taught them to pay tribute to Cæsar, but even paid it Himself. They object nevertheless, against their own con-



sciences, an odious offence, and one that they knew would appear the more probable to Pilate, because the sect of the Herodians was then flourishing, who are believed to have held it unlawful for Jews to pay tribute to a foreign king, as has been explained (xxii. 16).

*Thou sayest it.*

The words of S. John (xviii. 33, 34), "Art Thou the king of the Jews? Jesus answered, Sayest thou this thing of thyself, or have others told it thee of Me?" are to be placed before these. Christ would appear by these words to have pricked the conscience of Pilate, as if He had said, "Thou knowest that I am not the king of the Jews, but thou askest this at their demand". Pilate answered, "Am I a Jew? Thy own nation and the chief priests have delivered Thee up to me; what hast Thou done?" He saw that he was constrained by Christ, and he therefore appears to have answered with anger that he had not asked this of his own will: for he was not a Jew; but he performed the duties of a judge, and he was compelled as such to examine Christ on the points that were brought against Him by the Jews who had delivered Him up to him. Jesus answered: "My kingdom is not of this world"—that is, it is not mundane, not of the earth, not temporal, but heavenly and spiritual. It is not only the society of the blessed, but the congregation of the faithful, even upon earth. It is in the world, yet it is not of the world. It has its beginning not from the earth, but from heaven, as Christ is its head. By Him it is assembled and formed. It descends from heaven; for faith, which is its form, and charity, which is its bond and hope, which promises its rewards, are sent from heaven, as Christ said (*S. John* viii. 23; xv. 19). The whole question may be answered thus: Christ, as He is God, is not only the spiritual, but also the temporal King of the whole world, both of the higher and

of the lower. Hence (*Apoc.* xix. 16), "He hath on His garment and on His thigh written, King of kings and Lord of lords": to show that He is not King by force, nor by oppression, nor by election, nor by adoption, but by nature: for this is the meaning of "His thigh"; and because by nature being in the form of a servant, He thought it "not robbery to be equal with God" (*Philip.* ii. 6). Abraham commanded his steward to put his hand under his (Abraham's) thigh, and swear by the God of heaven and earth, because Christ would be born of his thigh (*Gen.* xxiv. 2). Christ assuredly, as He is man, is the Spiritual King of the whole Church. This is the kingdom which He bought for the Father with His blood, and which He will give back to Him at the end of the world (1 *Cor.* xv. 24). This is the kingdom of which David says, in *Psa.* ii. 6-8, "I am appointed king by Him"; he immediately goes on to describe it as a spiritual and not a temporal kingdom, "preaching His commandment" upon His holy mountain, because that Sion is to be understood in a spiritual sense, as S. Augustin says (*Tract.* cxv. on *S. John*). To teach the precepts of God is the work not of a temporal, but of a spiritual King. This is the kingdom of which David says in the same second Psalm: "I will give thee the Gentiles for thy inheritance"; because the Church was to be spread throughout the whole earth, and carried from sea to sea. This is the kingdom of which Christ spoke after His Resurrection (*S. Matt.* xxviii. 18, 19). He describes the nature of its power in the verse following: "Going, teach ye all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost". These are not the acts of a temporal, but of a spiritual King. And as in a temporal kingdom the king alone has power to make the laws, so Christ alone in the Church has power to institute the Sacraments, which are the remedy for sin in His spiritual kingdom, like the laws in a republic. But as

far as Christ is man, He is not the temporal king of the whole world. So says S. Augustin in the passage just cited, and all good teachers agree in the same view. For if so He must be king: (1) By a natural, (2) by a divine, or (3) by a human law. He was not king by a natural law, because He was not the son of a king, which is to be a king by nature. He was not a king by divine right, because all the Scriptures which speak of His kingdom are to be understood, as S. Augustin says, of a spiritual kingdom. He was not king by a human law, because He was not chosen to be such by the consent of the whole world; and when the Jews wanted to take Him by force and make Him a king, He escaped from them (S. *John* vi. 15). Christ shows (S. *John* xviii. 36) that His kingdom was not of the world, for if it had been, He would have had servants of this world to fight for Him. But He was so far from having, or desiring to have, an earthly kingdom, that He rebuked Peter severely for wounding the servant of the high priest in self-defence, and commanded him to put up his sword again into the sheath, signifying that his servants were not of earth but heaven: that is, they were the angels (xxvi. 53). Pilate now asked Him if He were a king, and He answered, as here related by S. Matthew (verse 11), "Thou sayest". By this expression He answered, not ambiguously, as S. Augustin and some others think, but firmly, that He was a king, using the same words as *supra*, chap. xxvi. 25-64.

Verse 12. *And when He was accused by the chief priests and ancients, He answered nothing.*

S. *Luke* xxiii. 4 should come before this, for, as S. John says (xviii. 38), Pilate, after he had questioned Christ as to whether He were a king, went out to the Jews who were outside the prætorium, and said, "I find no cause," that is, no fault, "in Him".

Verse 13. *Then Pilate said to Him, Dost Thou not hear how great testimonies they allege against Thee ?*

S. Matthew does not mention these testimonies, but S. Luke (xxiii. 5, 6) does. Herod was glad when he saw Christ, because he had heard much about Him before, and he desired to see some sign from Him. He questioned Christ much, but He did not answer. The chief priests and scribes vehemently accused Him to Herod. Herod, when Christ answered nothing, held Him in contempt, and put a white robe upon Him as an opprobrium, and sent Him back to Pilate ; and Pilate and Herod were made friends from that day, when they had before been at variance.

When Christ was sent back to Pilate, Pilate called the chief priests and said to them, the officers, and the people (S. Luke xxiii. 14-16): " You have presented unto me this man as one that perverteth the people, and behold I, having examined Him before you, find no cause in this man in those things wherein you accuse Him ; no, nor Herod neither. For I sent you to him, and behold, nothing worthy of death is done to Him. I will chastise Him, therefore, and release Him." This may be understood either of stripes or of words. At these words of Pilate the Jews probably began to insist and be urgent, and to accuse Christ, although the Evangelists do not mention it. Pilate may then have said what S. Matthew has related : " Dost Thou not hear how great testimonies they allege against Thee ? " (v. 14).

Verse 14. *And He answered him to never a word, so that the governor wondered exceedingly.*

It may appear strange that Christ kept such a resolute silence now, especially as He previously answered so freely. The reason of His having answered before was clearly that

He was then examined as to whether He were a king ; that is, whether He were the Christ : a fact which He could not deny, as He had come into this world to teach that He was the Christ, the Son of the living God.

Many reasons may be given for His present silence :

1. (which is deduced *per contrarium*). He was not now asked about the chief question, but about the commotion of the people, His doctrine, and other similar subjects of which, as open and notorious, they could not be ignorant ; and there was therefore no need for Him to answer about them, as He had before answered the chief priest (*S. John* xviii. 20).

2. The reason given by S. Ambrose (*Comm. on S. Luke*), S. Chrysostom, and Euthymius (*in loc.*), is that Christ knew that if He did answer, the Jews would not believe Him, as He had said (*S. Luke* xxii. 67).

3. Theophylact says that if He had answered, the anger of the Jews would have been excited, and their offence made greater.

4. S. Jerome and Bede say that if He had answered and confuted the accusation, He would have been acquitted, and the fruit of the Cross, our salvation, would have perished.

5. S. Ambrose said that He was silent because He needed no defence : "The Lord is accused and He holds His peace. He is rightly silent who needs no defence. They take pains to defend themselves who fear to be convicted. Christ did not confirm the accusation by His silence : He despised it by not replying to it."

6. The prophecy was fulfilled by this very silence (*Isa.* liii. 7).

Verse 15. *Now upon the solemn day.*

The day of Pasch, which was especially called the solemn day (*S. John* xviii. 39). Whether the Jews ob-

tained this as a new boon from the Romans when these took possession of Judæa, or it was an ancient custom continued to them by the Romans, is uncertain. It was most probably an ancient Jewish tradition to set at liberty a prisoner on this day, in remembrance of their delivery out of Egypt.

Verse 16. *And he had then a notorious prisoner that was called Barabbas.*

Notorious — ἐπίσημον, “remarkable,” “notorious,” but in a bad sense. He was in prison, not for virtue, but for his crimes. S. Mark (xv. 7), S. Luke (xxiii. 19), and S. John (xviii. 40) call him λήστην, the equivalent of the Latin word *latro*, one who robs and murders on the highway; a robber on a large scale, not a petty thief (κλέπτην).

Verse 17. *Whom will you that I release to you, Barabbas, or Jesus that is called Christ?*

It is clear from many circumstances that Pilate sought by every means in his power to release Christ. 1. As soon as Christ was brought before him, he asked the Jews what accusation they brought against Him (S. John xviii. 29). This was equivalent, as before said, to his asking them what accusation they brought against one who was both just and innocent. 2. When he had questioned Christ within the prætorium, he went out to the Jews, and said, “I find no cause in this man” (S. Luke xxiii. 4; S. John xviii. 38); and when he heard that Christ had taught throughout all Galilee, he gladly seized the occasion of sending Him as a Galilean to Herod (S. Luke xxiii. 7). When He was sent back by Herod, he again endeavoured to set Him free, saying that neither he himself nor Herod found any fault in Him. When this did not mitigate the rage of the Jews, he would have chastised Him, whether

with blows or words, and let Him go (*S. Luke* xxiii. 16). Pilate now brings their religion before the Jews, that, at least from respect to the solemn feast, when criminals were released, Christ, against whom no fault could be proved, might be set free. He used still other means. He does not name Christ singly, nor with a number of others, but with Barabbas, the most wicked of men, that the Jews, unless they were wholly blind, or beyond measure lost, might be compelled to choose Christ. Who could have supposed that Barabbas—a homicide, a seditious man, and a public robber—would have been preferred to Christ, against whom nothing could be objected, or at least substantiated? But the hatred of the Jews and the unjust conduct of Pilate prevailed. But Pilate still endeavoured to release Christ, for when the Jews insisted, “Away with Him, crucify Him” (*S. John* xix. 15), he exclaimed: “Shall I crucify your king?” as if it were against their honour to do this deed, however bad His conduct—for kings are beheaded, not crucified. The chief thing was the sending of the messenger by Pilate’s wife to warn him to have nothing to do with that just man, who, she had heard from the Jews, declared Himself to be the Son of God. Thus, as Pilate had previously endeavoured, from justice and religion, to set Christ free, he now attempted the same thing from fear. These events are all related by the Evangelists, no doubt to show us how unjustly Christ was condemned—(1) when a wicked and unjust judge sought again and again, from mere motives of religion and justice, to set Him free; (2) from a comparison of Pilate and the Jews to show the incredible iniquity and injustice of both; (3) that from the manner of His condemnation, extorted as it was by importunity from an unjust judge, who was wholly averse to the act, it might be seen that Christ was given over to the cross, not so much by man, as by the will of the Father.

Verse 19. *And as he was sitting in the place of judgment.*

That is, this happened very opportunely, as Pilate was now ready to give sentence, that the whole act might seem not to have been brought about by chance, but ordered by the Divine Will. S. Matthew, who is the only narrator of the event, has implied this.

*His wife sent to him, saying, Have thou nothing to do with that just man.*

That is, do not be concerned in His condemnation. Pilate's wife called Christ a just man both from common report and from her dream. She used the word "just" to persuade Pilate the more easily either by fear or religion. She was no doubt a pious woman, and either previously, or now from her dream, believed in Christ. At the same time she may have had some good womanly feeling, and feared lest any evil should befall her husband if he condemned a just man.

*For I have suffered many things this day in a dream because of Him.*

The Evangelist has not told us what it was, but we may easily believe that she was taught at once that Christ was innocent and that He was the Son of God, and that she foresaw the evils that would happen to Jerusalem from His death, and feared lest Pilate, as the author of it, might be involved in them.

It has been asked of what nature the dream was. Writers on the subject have described four kinds of dreams: 1. The natural dream, such as those of bile, sanguineousness, and melancholy. 2. The moral dreams, arising from our desires, actions, thoughts, and manner of life. In these we dream of what we do, or think strongly about, or desire. Hence Plato justly thought that the dreams of a philosopher and a wise man were different to



those of ordinary persons (*In Theæteto*). 3. The divine dream, which is frequently sent by God either with or without the agency of angels. Of these there are many notable examples in Scripture, as we have shown (ii. 13). 4. The diabolical dream, which comes from the devils; such are impure dreams.

That the dream of Pilate's wife was a natural dream, no one can say with any appearance of probability. Some think, or do not deny, that it was a moral dream, she having dreamed of Christ that night because she knew that He was accused by the Jews. There was not only a common, but a very ancient opinion, as we learn from S. Ignatius (*Ep. v. to Philip.*) and from Bede (*in loc.*), that it was a diabolical dream. For the devil had begun to perceive the Divinity of Christ, and to understand the mystery of His death, by which the world would be freed; and that he thus endeavoured to prevent His death. This opinion, however supported, appears quite untenable. For we have shown that Satan had already discovered the Divinity of Christ (iv.), and if he wished to hinder His death, why did he not rather act upon the minds of the Jews, who were the authors of the entire tragedy, than terrify by dreams a stranger woman, in whose sex even true divinations are considered mere illusive dreams?

The dream, therefore, was sent by God. This is the opinion of Origen, S. Hilary, S. Leo (*Serm. xi. de Pass.*), S. Chrysostom, S. Jerome, Euthymius, and Theophylact (*in loc.*).

It has been asked why the dream was not sent by God to Pilate rather than to his wife. S. Chrysostom, Theophylact, and Euthymius give two reasons: either Pilate was unworthy of a revelation from God; or he would have been suspected by the Jews of having invented the account, the better to procure the acquittal of Christ. God, if we may form a conjecture on the subject, may have chosen

that Christ's condemnation should have been so conducted that His innocence should be shown by every means, by the opinion of men of all classes, and, as it were, even by the consent of the elements themselves.

Not only the Jews, then, many of whom believed in Him: not only the judge who had to give sentence in His cause: not only the judge's wife, a woman previously ungodly, and, as a witness, capable of no suspicion of double-dealing: not only the centurion and the soldiers, who had a little before heaped revilings upon Him; but the darkened sun, the rent rocks, the divided veil, the earthquake, all gave evidence of the innocence and the Divinity of Christ.

Origen, S. Chrysostom, and Theophylact think it probable that the wife of Pilate was saved through that dream of Christ.

Verse 23. *What evil hath He done?*

S. Mark (xv. 14) says the same thing and in the same words. S. Luke says, *τί γὰρ κάκον ἐποίησε*. The causal particle *γάρ*, "for," renders the meaning difficult, for it does not seem clear what is its force. The Jews cried out, "Crucify Him". Pilate answered, "Why, what evil hath He done?" We may suppose, therefore, that *γάρ* is put for *οὖν*, the meaning being, "If you wish me to crucify Him, what evil has He done that I should do so?" that is, "Give me a reason for such an act". Pilate appears to have answered, not to what was said, but to what was understood. For the Evangelists do not recount all the events; but S. John says, that when the Jews raised the cry, "Crucify Him," Pilate answered, "Shall I crucify your king?" as meaning, "I will not do so, for what evil has He done?" S. Luke adds that Pilate said, "I will chastise Him and release Him". *παιδεύσας οὖν*, "either by words or by scourges". It appears from S. John, as we shall shortly

show, that He was scourged. After this, which is described in the same manner by S. Matthew and S. Mark, He was beaten with rods, crowned with thorns, robed in purple, and led forth to the Jews, Pilate saying his *Ecce homo* : that by this unhappy spectacle the ferocious minds of the Jews might be pacified. But S. Matthew and S. Mark, because they had begun to describe the condemnation of Christ, and to avoid breaking the thread of the history, put these things first. Such is the opinion of S. Augustin (*De Consens.*, iii. 9). S. Hilary, however, thinks that they have kept the order of events. Some say that Christ was scourged twice. Firstly, now at this time to mitigate the rage of the Jews, that, being contented with this punishment, they might release Him, as S. John says ; and a second time when He had been condemned. For S. Jerome says that it was the custom of the Romans to crucify no man until he had been scourged. This can easily be believed of the cruelty of the Jews, though there is no proof of it in the Gospels. Bede, however, approved it.

Verse 24. *And Pilate seeing that he prevailed nothing, but that rather a tumult was made.*

This does not excuse Pilate but Christ, while it shows that the governor, without any fitting testimony or any proof of crime, but only from fear of a popular tumult, condemned Christ, and in such a manner that his condemnation was, in truth, His acquittal.

*Taking water, washed his hands before the people.*

Some think that it was not the custom of the Jews alone that the judges of life and death should wash their hands, as in *Deut.* xxi. 6, but that heathen nations did the same, as they find in Sophocles and Virgil (*Æn.*, ii. 717). It may have been the custom of other nations, but it was not that of the Romans, as Origen has observed, and as

we learn from their historians. Pilate, though a Roman, in the cause of a Jew and before Jewish judges, wished by this means to testify his innocence. The Jews he knew practised the washing of hands as a proof of innocence, as shown by the passage of *Deuteronomy* cited above, and by *Psalms* xxv. 6: "I will wash my hands among the innocent"; but an offence of such gravity is not washed away by water, and S. Leo has well said, "The washing of his hands did not cleanse the defilement of Pilate's mind, nor did the sprinkling of water upon them expiate the wickedness of his soul. The wickedness of the Jews surpassed the offence of Pilate. They compelled him from fear of Cæsar, and by their voices, to the committal of this crime; but he did not escape the guiltiness of the act by resigning his proper office of judge, when, in co-operation with these seditious men, he fell into the commission of a heinous crime" (*Serm. viii. de Pass.*).

*I am innocent of the blood of this just man.*

Pilate expressed in words what he signified by the act of washing; and before he condemned Christ he acquitted Him, calling Him "that just man". At the same time he, by these same words, condemned himself, by sentencing one whom he had so called. He spoke falsely, therefore, when he said, "I am innocent"; for he could not be so, having condemned the innocent.

Verse 25. *His blood be upon us and upon our children.*

This is a Hebraism for "We will bear the penalty" (*Levit. xx. 9, 12, 16; Josh. ii. 19; 2 Kings i. 16; Ezek. xxxiii. 4; Osea xii. 14.*)

Verse 26. *Having scourged.*

(See verse 23.) What kind of scourge it was is unknown, and it is useless to enquire. It is commonly supposed to

have been made of thorns. Euthymius conjectures that it may have been of cords, or thongs of leather. It was more probably of twigs, such as the Romans used, and such as were carried by the lictors before the consuls.

*Then the soldiers of the governor.*

The word "then" in this instance does not mean consecutiveness of the events related, but the whole period of Christ's Passion. For we have shown from *S. John* (on verse 23) that the things which *S. Matthew* describes as having been done then, had been done before. The word "then" means here *sub idem tempus*, "about the time"; that is, a little before.

*Verse 27. Taking Jesus into the hall.*

That is, into the place where the tribunal of the prætor was, which was called the prætorium. *S. Mark* explains it (chap. xv. 16). It was in the hall, or somewhere near it; where they who had causes for trial might assemble. Why the soldiers led Christ into that place may be conjectured from the event. They wished to place Him in the tribunal, as a king in mockery. We see this from the crown which they placed on His head, and the purple robe which they put upon Him, and the reed which they gave Him for a sceptre. Finally, they placed Him on the tribunal as on a throne. We conclude, from *S. John* xix. 1, 2, that all that the soldiers did they did, by command of Pilate.

*Gathered together unto Him the whole band.*

As if to a king, to render their mockery more complete.

*Verse 28. And, stripping Him, they put a scarlet cloak about Him.*

*S. Mark* (xv. 17) and *S. John* (xix. 2) explain the word "scarlet" by purple. Everyone knows that purple was

the proper colour of kings, not only among the Romans, but other nations as well. Kings allowed some favourites to wear purple as a peculiar privilege (3 *Esdras* iii. 6 ; 1 *Macchab.* x. 20 ; xi. 58 ; xiv. 43, 44).

Verse 29. *And plattig a crown of thorns.*

It was platted in the shape of a crown, as for a king: and of thorns, to show that He was not a true king, but outcast and miserable. With the same object they put a reed into His right hand.

Verse 32. *And going out.*

As they were going out of the city or at the gate. The Greek does not use the aorist, ἐξελθόντες, "when they went out," but the present, ἐξερχόμενοι, which has the meaning of their having met the man of Cyrene actually at the gate of the city.

*They found a man of Cyrene.*

He was so called, either as having been born at Cyrene, or as being a native of the country, for the word included both the capital city and an entire region of Decapolis in Syria, which took its name from the city (Pliny, v. 5 ; Strabo, xvii. ; Melas, i. ; A. Marcellinus, xxii.). In this city and region were formerly Jews, as we find from *Acts* ii. 10. It is uncertain whether Simon were a Jew or Gentile. S. Hilary, S. Ambrose, Bede, and S. Leo (*Serm.* viii. *de Pass.*) think that he was a Gentile, and they suppose that there was a mystery in the case—showing that when the Jews did not believe, the Gentiles carried the cross. But as S. Mark (xv. 27) says that he was the father of Alexander and Rufus, he was most probably a Jew, for he names those men as well known, or, as some think, even disciples of Christ.

*Him they forced.*

*Angariaverunt.* On the meaning of this word, *vide* chap. v. 41. S. John (xix. 17) says that Christ bore His own cross. This can be easily be harmonised with S. Matthew and S. Mark if we say that at first the soldiers placed the cross on Christ, and that He carried it through the whole length of the city; but at the gate Simon the Cyrenian was met, and was compelled to carry it to the place of crucifixion. So think Origen (*Tract. xxxv. on S. Matt.*), S. Athanasius (*De Pass. et Cruc. Dom.*), S. Augustin (*De Consens.*, iii. 10), S. Jerome, Bede, Euthymius, and Theophylact.

It appears to have been the custom of those who were to be crucified to carry their own cross. And it was therefore laid at first upon Christ. Why Simon was compelled to bear it afterwards the Evangelists do not say, but it has been conjectured that Christ may have been so wearied by His watching and the scourging that He could carry it no farther. For although as God "He upholds all things by the word of His power" (*Heb. i. 3*), He allowed His human nature to suffer, as if He had not been God. Some think that this was done by the design of the Jews, who so wished to accelerate His death; that, as He was hindered by the weight of the cross from moving as quickly as they wished, they caused a strong man whom they happened to meet to carry it.

Perhaps, too, it was in mystery, that He might fulfil the type of Isaac, who bore on his shoulders the wood by which he was to be sacrificed (*Gen. xxii. 6*), and as S. Chrysostom (*Hom. lxxxiv. on S. John*), S. Augustin (*Tract. cxvii. on S. John*), and Theodoret (*In Impatib.*) explain it; but that it was afterwards carried by Simon, that Christ might teach by facts what He had taught before in words (xvi. 24): "If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me". S. Ambrose (*lib.*

x., *On S. Luke*) says : " It is a fitting order of events, that He should first erect the trophy of His cross, and then pass it on to His martyrs to erect it ".

It is related by S. Luke (xxiii. 27) that some women followed Him, and a great multitude of people weeping and lamenting. S. Matthew tells us who these women were : " Among whom were Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James and Joseph, and the mother of the sons of Zebedee " (verse 56), and that the rest of the multitude flocked together to Him. The chief priests may have alluded to these (*S. John* vii. 49), who probably alone believed in Christ. It is also related by S. Luke (xxiii. 28, 29) that Christ turned to the women, and said : " Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not over Me, but weep for yourselves and for your children. For behold, the days shall come." The word " behold " shows that Christ alluded to some time near at hand. It cannot be doubted that He meant the coming destruction of Jerusalem—that by Titus and Vespasian, when all the Jews, and especially the women, underwent sufferings so dreadful that, as related by Josephus, some were compelled to eat even their own infants.

Christ spoke to the women rather than to the men : (1) Because it is to be thought that, according to their nature, the women lamented more than the men ; and (2) because in the slaughter at the taking of the city, they would suffer more misery than the men. Christ forbids them to weep for Him, showing that it was not ill with Him, for He was not dragged by force to obey His Father's will and free man from the tyranny of the devil ; but that He was going to death voluntarily, and would soon be exalted to the right hand of the Father, and receive a name above every name. He bids them weep for themselves, because they would soon have to pay the penalty of His death—the destruction of Jerusalem, its result, being imminent.



Not that these women would witness that catastrophe themselves, for all of them would probably die before it ; but that the women then living would suffer such and so great miseries, that He could say : "Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that have not borne, and the paps that have not given suck" (*S. Luke* xxiii. 29). For, although He spoke to those persons, He did not speak of them, but of the whole body of women ; as in chap. iii. 11, S. John Baptist did not mean that those particular individuals with whom he was speaking would be baptised by Christ, and who perhaps never were so, but that the Jews, *quales illi erant*, would be baptised by the Holy Ghost and by fire. The Evangelist describes the lamentations of the women, which, in their self-forgetfulness, are apt to be raised for their children rather than themselves. David (in *Ps.* lxvii. 63) describes in other terms the last extremity of distress. S. Matthew uses a different but similar figure to the same result (xxiv. 19) : "Woe to them that are with child and that give suck in those days," because such women would be impeded in their flight, and undergo double suffering, for themselves and for their infants. "Then shall they begin to say to the mountains, Fall on us, and to the hills, Cover us." These are the words of men suffering the last extremity of ill, who wish to die but cannot, and who, overwhelmed by the greatness of their sufferings, cry to the mountains to fall upon and deliver them. The same expression is found in *Isa.* ii. 19 ; *Osee* x. 8 ; *Apoc.* vi. 16. "For if in the green wood they do these things, what shall be done in the dry?" Christ compares Himself to the green tree and the Jews to the dry, because as a green tree is ill adapted for burning and the dry is very fit for it, so He is very little fit for—that is, is no way worthy of—punishment, but the Jews are most fit—that is, most worthy—if for no other reason, at least for this, that

they delivered Christ to death, whom they ought to have received as their Saviour.

What Christ here calls "the green tree," S. Paul, by another metaphor, calls "vessels of wrath fitted for destruction" (*Rom.* ix. 22), that is, vessels so frail as to be broken by the slightest touch. S. Paul desires to point out those who, by adding sin to sin, are so ripe for punishment that, unless the infinite mercy of God sustained them, the earth would open and swallow them. The Prophets compare such men to stubble, and the wrath of God to the flames (*Isa.* v. 24; xxxiii. 11; xlvii. 14; *Abdias* i. 18; *Malachi* iv. 1). Christ argues, therefore, from the less to the greater: If God have not spared Me who am innocent, but have commanded Me to undergo such heavy punishment for others, how will He spare those who have brought Me to the cross? S. Peter uses a similar argument (1 *Epist.* iv. 17, 18).

Verse 33. *And they come to the place that is called Golgotha, which is the place of Calvary.*

The Hebrews call it גִּלְגֻּלְתָּא "a head," because it is round, The Syriac and Chaldean, by the addition of one letter, גִּלְגֻּלְתָּא "Golgotha". For so it should be read. By the fault, probably of the transcriber, that letter has dropped out, and length of time has confirmed the error. Why the place was so called is not known. The ancient opinion, which has the support of many early authors, is that it was called Golgotha—that is, Calvary, or a skull—because the head of Adam, the first man, was found there; for there was a strong tradition that Adam was buried in that place. Of this opinion were Origen (*Tract.* xxxiii. in *S. Matt.*), S. Cyprian (*Serm. de Resurrect.*), S. Athanasius (*Serm. de Passione et Cruce*), who cites the authority of ancient Hebrew Doctors. S. Ambrose (*Comment. on S. Luke*) does the same.

So also thought S. Basil (*Comment. on Isaiah* v.), S. Epiphanius (*Hær.* xlv., and *Anchoratus*), S. Chrysostom (*Hom.* lxxxiv. on *S. John*), S. Augustin (*Serm.* lxxiv. *de Temp.*; *De Civitat.*, vi. 32), and Paula and Eustochium, two learned women, in a letter to Marcella, in the works of S. Jerome. S. Jerome himself refutes this opinion, rightly perhaps, but by an argument of no great force. "Scripture," he says, "teaches us that Adam was not buried near Mount Sion and Jerusalem, formerly called Jebus, but in Hebron." The name Hebron, we are told by Joshua (xiv. 15), was formerly Cariath Arbe. "The name of Hebron before was called Cariath Arbe. Adam, the greatest among the Enacims, was laid there." The word "Adam" here is not a proper name, but an appellative, which it is not strange that S. Jerome, learned father as he was, but occupied with other subjects, did not see. Some thought, as S. Cyril of Jerusalem says in his Thirteenth Catechetical Lecture, that the mountain was called Calvary from its resemblance to a human head, but he rejects the opinion for topographical reasons: "There is no mountain," he says, "on that spot called Calvary". He thinks that the place was so called prophetically, because Christ, our Head, was to suffer there. The opinion of S. Jerome and Bede seems better. They say that the name Calvary was given to the place because criminals were decapitated there, and the place was full of skulls. They who were crucified there were taken away and buried, but such as were beheaded were left, as S. Jerome tells us, without burial.

Verse 34. *And they gave Him wine to drink mingled with gall.*

S. Mark (xv. 23) says that they gave Him wine mingled with myrrh. The Ancients explain the apparent contradiction in different manners. S. Augustin (*De Consens.*, iii. 11) thinks that S. Mark's "wine mingled with myrrh" was

not infected by the gall, but S. Matthew says that it was mixed with gall. Gall is bitter ; as we say of a thing that is bitter, "It is gall," or "mixed with gall". He also thinks, and Bede and Strabus follow him, that the wine, myrrh, and gall were mixed together, and that S. Matthew speaks of the gall and not of the myrrh ; S. Mark of the myrrh and not of the gall.

Euthymius thinks that two draughts were offered by two different persons, one mixed with myrrh, the other with gall.

Some suppose that the devout women who followed Christ lamenting first gave Him wine mingled with myrrh to remove or deaden the pain, as was usually done to those who were crucified. They suppose that this draught, and the one mentioned by S. Luke (xxiii. 36) and S. John (xix. 29) as given to Christ on the cross when He was at the point of death, were one and the same. S. Chrysostom originated this opinion, and Euthymius adopted it ; but from the different accounts of the Evangelists, it is evident that they were different draughts. S. Matthew and S. Mark imply that the wine mingled with myrrh was given before He was crucified to deaden the pain. But S. Luke and S. John say that the other draught was given, not only when He was on the cross, but when He was on the point of resigning His breath, and had undergone all the full tortures of the cross. Again, S. Matthew and S. Mark speak of wine ; S. Luke and S. John of vinegar. For although the Greek here reads *ὄξος*, "vinegar," and Origen, S. Chrysostom, Euthymius, and S. Jerome, and still more, the Syriac, so read it, yet it is clear from S. Mark that it is a wrong reading, in whom, as he relates the same event, no one ever read anything but "wine". It is most certain that S. Mark, speaking a little after of the drink which S. Luke and S. John state to have been given to Christ when dying, says : "And immediately one of them, running, took

a sponge and filled it with vinegar, and put it on a reed, and gave Him to drink" (verse 48), distinguishing that draught beyond question from the one spoken of here. The one speaks of wine, the other of vinegar; one as given before Christ was nailed to the cross, the other when He was hanging on it; the one was given probably in a vessel, the other in a sponge on a reed; the one when He did not ask for it, the other when He said, "I thirst". Our version certainly here reads "wine," not "vinegar". So do S. Hilary, S. Ambrose (*Comment. on S. Luke*), S. Augustin (*De Cons. Evang.*, iii. 11), Juvenius (*Hist. Evang.*, iv.), Sedulius (*Carm.*, v.), and probably S. Jerome, for he speaks, in his commentary, not of vinegar, but wine. But some unskilful hand erased the word "wine" from a corrupt copy, and substituted "vinegar," transferring it into the text of S. Matthew found in the commentaries of S. Jerome. Certainly, S. Hilary and S. Ambrose think the former offering mentioned by S. Matthew (verse 34) and the latter in verse 48, of which S. Luke and S. John also speak, to be different. That this is so must appear to every careful student of the Gospels beyond dispute.

*And when He had tasted He would not drink.*

S. Mark says that He received it not. The two passages seem to be at variance, but they do not really differ. S. Matthew says that He received it—that is, He tasted it; S. Mark that He did not receive it—that is, He did not drink it, as S. Augustin explains it in the passage cited above. Why Christ would not drink the wine when He had tasted it may be a question. Possibly He tasted it that He might not appear to despise wine offered according to custom; but He would not drink it, to show that He had no need of medicaments to help Him in bearing the agonies of the cross.

Thus we ourselves, if invited to drink when we do not

thirst, taste wine offered to us, in acknowledgment of the courtesy, but, for temperance, we do not drink deeply. This double draught fulfilled the words of David (*Ps.* lxxviii. 22): "They gave me gall for my food, and in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink". Wine was given first to Christ mixed with gall, or with myrrh, which from its bitterness was called gall, and then vinegar. But the gall, according to the Prophet, was given to Him not to drink, but to eat. And rightly so; for as David spoke of gall only, which, if not diluted with some other fluid, has more of the nature of food than drink, he called it food, and not drink. S. Matthew, with this view, perhaps, though he knew that that wine was not mixed with real gall, but was only said to be so by metaphor (that is, it was diluted with bitter myrrh), yet said that it was mixed with gall, to show by a word in passing that the prophecy was fulfilled.

It has been asked why Christ chose this kind of death. S. Gregory of Nyssa (*Orat. de Resurrect. Chti.*) and S. Thomas, in his commentary on this passage of *S. Matthew*, have given reasons for this. That of S. Paul to the Philippians would have been sufficient—Christ desired to undergo the most shameful death for us, that He might thus humble Himself and show His great love for man, and afford an example of humility (*Philip.* ii. 8; *1 Pet.* ii. 21).

Verse 35. *And after they had crucified Him they divided His garments.*

S. Luke says that Christ even on the cross prayed for His murderers: "Father forgive them, for they know not what they do" (xxiii. 34). Christ showed clearly by these words that He underwent death even for the very men who crucified Him; thus confuting the ancient heresy of the Predestinarians and their successors, the followers of Calvin, who assert that He died only for the predestinate.

*Casting lots.*

S. Mark (xv. 24) says: "They divided His garments, casting lots upon them, what every man should take". S. Luke (xxiii. 34): "They, dividing His garments, cast lots". These three Evangelists, and especially S. Mark, write as if all the clothing of Christ was distributed by lot, nor could we have understood them in any other sense, unless S. John had related it more distinctly (xix. 23, 24). From this it appears that not all Christ's garments, but only the coat, was so disposed of, as has been observed by Euthymius. Some conclude from S. Luke that Christ had five coats, but it is clear from S. John that He had only one. For he says that the soldiers divided His garments, and also His coat, opposing this to the others. This Euthymius has clearly perceived. What the coat and the other garments were is not known with certainty. We may conjecture that the coat was that which came next to the under-garment, if Christ used one, and covered the whole person. There is no kind of garment more probably without a seam. By the other garments, the upper one in place of which the soldiers put on the purple robe, the shoes, and the other clothing such as even poor men wear may be understood.

There was a tradition, not devoid of probability, that the seamless coat had been woven for Christ by His Mother when He was a child. This, as very ancient, is mentioned with approbation by Euthymius. The reader will question whether the garments of the robbers were also divided by the soldiers, for the Evangelists are silent on the point. It was probably the custom of the Romans, as of other nations, to leave the clothing of those who had been put to death to the executioner. The garments of the robbers, therefore, may have been distributed among the soldiers, but the Evangelists, because they were writing the history of Christ and not of

the thieves, and as they knew that in the division of their clothing there was no mystery, whereas that of Christ was not only by custom, but there was mystery in it, that the words of David might be fulfilled (*Ps.* xxi. 19), made no mention of the robbers', but only of Christ's.

Hence S. Matthew immediately adds, "that it might be fulfilled," &c. (verse 35). Although these words are not found in some Greek copies, and Origen and Euthymius do not read them, yet our Latin version has them, as has also the Syriac; and it can easily be believed that S. Matthew wrote them, as, of all the Evangelists, he is the most careful always to point out the prophecies that were fulfilled by Christ.

Verse 37. *And they put over His head His cause written.*

That is, they affixed to the part of the cross which was over the head of Christ. It is not certain whether there was a scroll fastened to the wood of the cross, or whether it was written on the cross itself; the former is the most generally believed, and is the most probable. For (1) there would hardly have been room on the cross itself for so many words in three languages, and of a size to be read by passers-by. (2) One who was about to place such an inscription on the cross of a man crucified would naturally write it on a tablet. (3) The Empress Helena, the mother of Constantine, is said to have found such a tablet apart from the cross (*Ruffinus, Hist. Eccles.*, i. 7).

It has not been a question, though it might have been, whether the robbers also had titles. It would appear probable that they had; for it was the custom that his offence should be stated on the cross of everyone who suffered death upon it. It was under this law that Christ's title was imposed.

S. Ambrose (*Orat. de obitu et vita Theodosii*) and other ancient authors relate that when Helena found the crosses,



that of Christ was distinguished from the rest by its title. This is very probable. It might have been identified, not as having had a title while the others had none, but as the title of Christ's had been, "This is Jesus of Nazareth the King of the Jews". From these words it would be clear that it was the cross of Christ.

*This is Jesus the King of the Jews.*

S. Mark (xv. 26) only gives, "The King of the Jews". S. Luke (xxiii. 38), "This is the King of the Jews". S. John (xix. 19), "Jesus of Nazareth the King of the Jews". All the Evangelists, therefore, seem to have given the meaning of the title, but none of them all the words of it. From the whole we may conclude the words to have been, "This is Jesus of Nazareth the King of the Jews".

S. John says that the title was placed by the command of Pilate, whether according to custom, because it was the duty of the judge to state the offence of a condemned criminal, or that that was done by private design in the case of Christ alone which was not done to others; that as the cause of Christ was most just, and He Himself was unjustly condemned, Pilate might clear himself by this public eulogy; pretending that Christ was justly condemned for asserting that He was a king against the faith due to Cæsar. It is clear from S. John that, whatever his intention, it was overruled by divine counsel; so that even the judge himself who had condemned Christ, really proved by the very title by which he sought to show that he condemned Christ justly, that he had done so unjustly, thus bearing witness that Christ was the true King of the Jews, that is, the Messiah. For, when the Jews asked Pilate, on reading the inscription, not to put "The King of the Jews," but "He said," &c., Pilate answered, "What I have written, I have written". "I cannot alter it, because

it was held, as it were in the divine hand, that I should be impelled to write these words."

It cannot be doubted that Pilate, in the words, "This is Jesus of Nazareth the King of the Jews," meant nothing but that which the Jews required of him: "This is Jesus of Nazareth who made Himself the King of the Jews"; but it was of Divine Providence that he used words which showed Christ to be truly such. God thus extorted the truth from the unjust judge.

Verse 38. *Then were crucified with Him two thieves, one on the right hand and one on the left.*

S. Mark (xv. 28) gives one reason why Christ was crucified with the thieves, that the prophecy of Isaiah (liii. 12) might be fulfilled. But Pilate, who was a profane man and thought nothing of the fulfilment of prophecy, may have supposed that if he crucified Christ by Himself, he might appear to do so at the wicked entreaties of the Jews, and not from justice; but when He crucified Him with men of this class, whom no one could doubt to be justly condemned, the similarity of the deaths might go some way to prove a similarity in their crimes; it is not improbable that the Jews even solicited Pilate to crucify Christ with the thieves, that His death might be more ignominious.

That Christ was placed between the two thieves may be thought the result at once of the human design of the Jews and of the divine counsel of God. Of the Jews, to show that Christ was the head and chief of wicked men, and therefore should be crucified in the midst of such, that by this kind of contumelious distinction His disgrace might be the more augmented; for the leaders of robbers, when taken with their followers, are hung in the midst of them, and in some conspicuous place. Of the counsel of God, to show that Christ laid down His life for sinners, that who-

ever would have life might receive life. The event proved the mystery, for one of the two robbers believed, the other blasphemed.

He who was crucified calls all sinners to Himself. So says S. John (xii. 32). He draws all things to Himself, not in effect, but in will. He would have drawn both the thieves to Him if they would. He wished to draw both—seizing one, as it were, by the right hand and the other by the left. He drew one, the other He did not draw. The one suffered himself to be drawn, the other did not. Tertullian finds another mystery in this. “Christ,” he says, “is always crucified between two thieves.” He calls the Church and the doctrine Christ, as Christ Himself did when He said, “Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?” and that, when Saul was persecuting, not Christ Himself, whom he believed to be dead, but His Church and doctrine. We see, as Tertullian says, that the Church is most frequently persecuted between two opposite heresies.

The Ebionites said that Christ was God alone, and had only the appearance of man. The Church stands in the midst, and joins the two in one—true God and true man.

The Sabellians taught that Father, Son, and Holy Ghost were not only one nature, but one Person also.

The Arians said that Father, Son, and Holy Ghost were not only three Persons, but three natures also.

The Church stands in the middle, teaching one nature, three Persons.

The Nestorians said that in Christ were not only two natures, but two Persons also.

The Eutychians taught that there was both one Person and one nature.

The Church, in the middle, says one Person, two natures.

The Manichæans of old, and the followers of Luther and Calvin in these days, deny that man has any free-

dom of will, and refer everything either to nature or divine grace.

The Pelagians say that we have such strength of free-will that we have no need of divine grace.

The Church is in the middle, and says that we have indeed free-will, on the one hand, but that, on the other, we still need the grace of God.

Verse 39. *And they that passed by blasphemed Him.*

S. Matthew says "they that passed by," meaning all who did so, to show that not by one or two, but by all in common, were insults heaped upon the crucified Christ.

*Wagging their heads.*

To move the head was a sign among the Jews sometimes of commiseration or of admiration united with pity, sometimes also of derision. In *Job* xvi. 5 ; xlii. 11, it is a sign of commiseration ; that is, they wept with him that wept according to the admonition of S. Paul (*Rom.* xii. 15 ; *Ecclus.* xii. 18, 19 ; *Jerem.* xviii. 16). Of derision, 4 *Kings* xix. 21 ; *Is.* xxxvii. 22 ; *Ps.* xxi. 8, in which this scene was foretold long before. For that whole psalm is to be understood of Christ suffering, as He Himself shows (verse 46) by repeating its commencement ; and *Ps.* cviii. 25 ; *Ecclus.* xiii. 8 ; *Lam.* ii. 15.

Verse 42. *If He be the King of Israel, let Him now come down from the cross.*

It was not for the king, as such, to come down from the cross ; for a king may be no stronger nor more able to work miracles than another man. The words are to be understood as in adaptation to the subject. They understand the king who would be the Messiah, and the Son of God, as Christ professed Himself to be (*S. Mark* xv. 32 ; *S. Luke* xxiii. 35).

Verse 43. *He trusted in God. Let Him now deliver Him if He will have Him.*

The priests showed their blindness, bringing up Scripture against themselves; for these words, which they used to convict Christ, are taken from *Ps. xxi.*, which, as just stated, was written entirely of Christ. They are the words of the wicked who opposed not only the Divine Providence but even God Himself; and derided the holy David, who served Him because he trusted to Him in adversity. "He trusted in God," they say; "let God deliver Him, seeing that He delighteth in Him"; that is, David loved Him, that is, God—as if they had said, "Let the God whom He loves deliver Him". In the same sense we should understand what is here put concisely, "Let God deliver Him if He will have Him"; that is, if He love God. It is a Hebraism—*יְשִׁיבֵהוּ* *vellē*; that is, *amare*, "to love". In the Greek it is expressed more at length—*ῥυσάσθω αὐτὸν εἰ θέλει αὐτόν*, *liberet nunc eum si vult eum*; that is, *si amat eum*, keeping the same Hebraism; for the Greeks do not say *θέλει αὐτόν*. The unwise priests, whilst they endeavour to mock Christ, prove Him by their very act to be the true Christ; for they fulfil the prophecy of David which was spoken of Christ. For although those words were written by David of himself, as if spoken to him by his enemies, it cannot be but that he showed in his own person what would happen to Christ.

Verse 44. *And the self-same thing.*

That is, the same words, or the same reproaches in other words: "If Thou be Christ, save Thyself and us" (*S. Luke xxiii. 39*).

*The thieves also that were crucified with Him.*

S. Mark describes the same thing in the same words. S. Luke says that one only of the thieves mocked Him. Many

of the Ancients have therefore supposed that at first both of the thieves mocked Christ ; but that afterwards one of them, seeing the portents which were taking place, *patiente Christo*, and His singular patience and meekness, believed in Him, and rebuked the other. Origen, S. Athanasius (*Serm. cont. Hæres. Omn.*), S. Hilary, S. Cyprian, Theophylact, and Euthymius (*in loc.*) are of this opinion. S. Ambrose, S. Jerome, and Bede think it probable. S. Cyprian (*Serm. de Pass. Dom.*), S. Cyril Jerusalem (*Cat. Comm.*, xiii.), S. Augustin (*De Cons.*, iii. 17), S. Ambrose (*Comment. on S. Luke*), S. Jerome (*in loc.*), S. Leo (*Serm. ii. de Pass.*), and S. Gregory (*On Job* xxvii. 16) hold the opinion, which appears more probable, that only one of the thieves reviled.

It is easy to see why S. Matthew and S. Mark spoke of the thieves in the plural number. They did so by syllepsis. S. Ambrose and S. Augustin bring many similar passages from Scripture. "The kings of the earth stood up, and the princes met together against the Lord, and against His Christ" (*Ps.* ii. 2), though there was only one Herod who conspired against Him, as S. Peter says (*Acts* iv. 26, 27). Again (*Heb.* xi. 33, 34), Daniel alone stopped the mouths of lions, and (verse 37) Isaiah alone was cut asunder. Euthymius says that the Evangelists related these insults of the thieves to show us what and how many contumelies were endured by Christ, when not only the chief priests and the others who brought Him to that place, but even the thieves who were His companions in His punishment, and who should have been filled with compassion both for themselves and for Him, covered Him with reproaches. The robbers were probably Jews : (1) because one received Christ, even when hanging on the cross, as the Messiah so long expected by the Jews ; and (2) because the other treated Him with all the malice and incredulity of the Jews. S. Luke (xxiii. 40) says that the other rebuked the

blasphemer, saying, *Neque tu times Deum*, οὐδὲ φοβῇ σὺ τὸν Θεόν. These few words, "variously taken with each other," admit of several explanations.

1. If joined together thus: "*Nec*, 'neither,' fearest thou God," the *nec* being referred to *times*, "fearest," and meaning, "Thou not only dost not love and revere God, but thou dost not even fear Him". This opinion, which is a more modern one, seems hardly tenable, because no doubt the good and faithful thief meant to compare the other with the Jews. This comparison is contained in the word *nec*, "neither," as if he had said, "Not only those who are under no punishment feel no fear of God, but even thou, who art in the same condemnation, feelest none".

2. If the stress comes on *Deum*, "God," the meaning will be, "Not only dost thou not fear man, but not even God Himself". This also seems inadmissible, because it is not in agreement with the subject. There is no force in the faithful thief saying, "Thou fearest not men alone, but thou dost not even fear God". It seems clear that the words are to be taken as meaning, "Neither dost *thou* fear God," although the Greek is οὐδὲ φοβῇ σὺ τὸν θεόν. Our version rightly alters the order of the words, and makes the meaning plainer. The meaning will then be that, "Not only these, who, as they are suffering no punishment, are moved by no pity for that of this man, but rather forgetful of the fear of God, heap insults upon Him, but not even dost thou, who art under the same punishment as He, and who oughtest, therefore, not to insult, but to commiserate Him, fear God, but like the rest, without fear, addest affliction to the afflicted". This is the meaning of that 40th verse of S. Luke: "Neither dost thou fear God, seeing thou art under," or "because thou art under," "the same condemnation," as our version renders the Greek, which is somewhat obscure.

An entirely new explanation has been offered by some

Moderns—ὅτι ἐν τῷ αὐτῷ κρίματι εἶ; that is, "Because thou art under the same condemnation," as if the thief had said, "Though thou art at the point of death, and art undergoing the most extreme punishment, thou dost not fear God". But the Greek does not allow this; for the Evangelist did not say, ὅτι ἐν τῷ αὐτῷ κρίματι, but ὅτι ἐν τῷ αὐτῷ τῷ κρίματι. These words mean not "that," but "the same" condemnation. But as the expression "the same" can only be used by comparison, another difficulty arises. With *what* condemnation—that is, with *what* punishment (for it is clear that condemnation, or, as the Greek word is, κρίμα, *judicium*, is called punishment)—is that of the thief compared? Some think it the condemnation of the Jews, as if the meaning were, "Neither dost thou fear God more than these Jews, though thou deservest the same punishment as they for the contumelies heaped upon Christ".

This explanation seems to be strengthened by the opinion we have lately offered, that by the words "neither dost thou" the other thief was compared to the Jews. Some suppose that there is a comparison by the penitent thief of his own punishment with the punishment of the other. As if he had said: "While you are in the same suffering as I, you yet do not fear God more than the rest". But this explanation is *abs re*. The comparison seems to be between the punishment of Christ and that of the thief; and thus the meaning will be taken to be: "Although you are in the same punishment as Christ, and, what is more, you are suffering justly and He unjustly, neither your fellowship in His punishment, nor His innocence moves you to pity Him". The stress rightly falls upon the words (verse 41), "we indeed justly, but He hath done nothing amiss," which is a correction of verse 40. As the good thief had said that the other was under the same punishment as Christ, he might have appeared to signify that Christ had therefore committed a like offence. To prevent this he



classes himself by his words, "we indeed justly," with the other, that his blame might be more moderate and gentle; and, not to appear to visit him too severely, he blamed himself in an equal degree. *Nihil mali gessit*—that is, οὐδὲν ἄτοπον—nothing unbecoming a good man. The good thief wished by these words to show, not merely that there was no great wickedness in Christ, but that there was not even the very slightest cause for blame. The word ἄτοπον shows this, and therefore the thief used the word "Lord" (*S. Luke* xxiii. 42). These words mean, not "when Thou comest to reign," but "when Thou comest, reigning already"; not "when Thou comest to obtain a kingdom," but "when Thou hast obtained it"—as Christ will come to the judgment. A brief but full confession; for the thief confessed in a few words that Christ is both God and King: a King when he said, "when Thou comest to Thy kingdom," and God when he calls Him "Lord," and confesses Him to be such a King as to be able to forgive sins. Lastly, the words "Remember me" show that He believed in Christ's Resurrection. For he would not have asked One who was apparently drawing His last breath to remember him when He came to His kingdom, unless he believed that He would both rise again and reign after He had risen.

This confession, though most admirable in itself, yet is more so if we take the time, place, and circumstances into consideration, as S. Chrysostom (*Hom. ii. de Cruce et Latr.*) and S. Leo (*Serm. ii. de Passione*) have observed. S. Leo's words are as follows: "What exhortation urged to that confession? What teaching instilled it? What preacher kindled it? The thief had not seen Christ's miracles before: His care of the sick, His giving sight to the blind, His raising the dead, had ceased. The events that were to be had not yet taken place, and still he confessed Him, whom he only saw as a sharer of his own

punishment, to be his Lord and King." "Remember me." A modest request. The thief did not ask to be made a sharer of Christ's kingdom, or to have a more honourable place in it than others, nor to sit on His right hand or on His left, as the wife of Zebedee asked for her sons (xx. 21). He only said, "Remember me"; as if he had said, "Do not shut me out, or take account of my sins, but for Thy mercy and loving-kindness admit me even to the lowest place. S. Augustin rightly concludes from these words that there is a purgatory. The thief saw that he would shortly die, and yet he prayed Christ to remember him—that is, to forgive his sins after his death. He believed, therefore, according to the Jewish religion, that sins would be forgiven after death. But this can only be done in purgatory. S. Luke (xxiii. 43) says that Christ answered, "Amen, I say to thee this day thou shalt be with Me in paradise". Three difficult questions are caused by these words: (1) on "this day"; (2) on "in paradise"; (3) on "with Me". 1. Some join the words "this day" to "say," as if Christ had said, "Amen, I say to thee this day," not "Thou shalt be with Me this day," as Theophylact says. If this had been Christ's meaning He would assuredly have said, "Amen, I say unto thee now," and not "this day". Others even more senselessly refer these words to a period after the Resurrection, that is, to the Day of Judgment; as if Christ had said, "This day," that is, after the Resurrection and last judgment. This would involve the souls of the blest not being in any state of bliss before the supreme judgment. If Christ had meant this He would not have answered the prayer well; for although this would only have granted what was asked, it is clear that Christ granted far more than this. The thief had said, "Remember me"; that is, "Forgive my offences". Christ answered, "This day thou shalt be with Me in paradise"; that is, "I will not only forgive thy sins, but I will give thee the best place

—I will bring thee into paradise to be with Me". As if He had said, "Near Me where I am"—as He said before (*S. John* xii. 26), "Where I am there also shall My minister be". The thief had asked to be remembered, not immediately, but when Christ should come into His kingdom. The answer of Christ was, "This day"—"I will not delay the granting of thy prayer so long as thou askest—for so many ages; I will give thee thy prayer this day". The words "this day" correspond to the thief's "when Thou comest". Others have passed this over. S. Augustin alone seems to have seen it (*Cont. Felician*, cxv.).

2. "In paradise." These words have been explained both by Ancients and Moderns, and in many different senses. Some, as S. Cyril of Jerusalem (*Catech. Comm.*, xiii.), S. Greg. Nyss. (*Serm. de Resur. Dom.*), S. Chrysostom (*Hom. ii. de Cruce et Latr.*), S. Augustin (*Tract. cxi. on S. John*), say that paradise here means heaven. If it be asked how the thief could be in heaven with Christ on that day, when He Himself would not ascend into it till after forty days, the above authors and others who hold this opinion answer that Christ, as He is God, is everywhere present, and that He was therefore in heaven on that day. But Christ evidently meant that not only the thief, but that He Himself also should be that day in paradise, where, when He spoke those words, He was not. There is a sort of tacit comparison of persons and antithesis of places in these words, as if Christ had said: "As thou art with Me in the same punishment now, so thou shalt be with Me this day in the same paradise".

Others explain paradise to be the place of Adam where was the terrestrial paradise. Among these are Theophylact and Euthymius. But these from the word "paradise" would place Christ and the thief in the country of Mesopotamia, or wherever Adam's paradise was. But what would Christ do there after His death, or what benefit would it have been

to the thief to be carried to a place which is now waste and barren and without enjoyment? Others think that no especial place was intended, but that wherever Christ is, and is seen to be God, there paradise is said to be; and because the soul of the thief was to follow Christ and see Him as God on that day, he is therefore said to be about to be with Christ in paradise. Many Moderns adopt this idea, and cite S. Augustin and Bede as its author. Let them see how truly. It seems to be an idea which, whoever was its author, cannot be maintained; for Christ spoke of paradise as a place where He then was not. On the other hand, this opinion seems open to objection; for if paradise is merely a place whence God is seen, the thief was in paradise when hanging on the cross, for he there saw God, and, as the Doctors of the Church agree, never ceased to be in bliss.

Paradise, in fact, would appear to be the bosom of Abraham, the place where the holy men of old were in waiting until the way to heaven was opened to them. This place was called paradise and the place of rest; for into it as a place of enjoyment, or certainly of rest, Lazarus was carried by the angels after his death (*S. Luke* xvi. 22). As, then, Christ was about to go down thither on that same day to show Himself to the holy fathers and the spirits who were there, and to preach the Gospel to them, as S. Peter tells us (1 *Ep.* iii. 19), that returning thence He might lead captivity captive (*Ephes.* iv. 8), Christ promised the thief that he should go thither with Him that same day. This is the opinion of S. Justin Martyr (*Quæst.* 76 *ad Orthod.*), S. Athanasius (*Ep. to Epictetus*), S. Augustin (*De Genes. ad Litt.*, xii. 34), and Prudentius (*Hymn. pro Defunctis*). From this it is clear how the third word, *mecum*, is to be understood: "Where I also shall be, whither I am about to go". It is said by some teachers of heresy that there is no purgatory, and that no offence is remitted

without also the remission of the punishment, for both were remitted to the thief, who was not sent into purgatory after his death but was admitted to paradise. These argue from the particular to the general. There was no purgatory for the thief, therefore there is none for any man ; the offence of the thief was remitted and his punishment was remitted also ; to none, therefore, when the fault is remitted is the punishment retained. By this reasoning there would be neither paradise nor hell. Not to speak of the other thief, an infinite number of lost souls have no paradise. Are we, therefore, to conclude that there is no paradise for anyone ? Not only for this thief of whom we are speaking, but also for the Apostles and many others of the blessed, there was no hell. Is there none, therefore, for any man ? It would be well if this were so ; we should then be free from the numberless evils by which God punishes us. Who denies that diseases, the miseries of this life, and death itself are the penalties of original sin ? But the fault of original sin is remitted, though the punishments of it are retained. Who does not know that the offence of David's adultery was forgiven, though some portion of the punishment was inflicted upon him (2 *Kings* xii. 13, 14) ?

The words of S. John (xix. 25, 26, 27) apply here : " Now there stood by the cross of Jesus His Mother and His Mother's sister, Mary of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus, therefore, had seen His Mother and the disciples standing whom He loved, He said to His Mother, ' Woman, behold thy son '." Christ called His Mother woman and not mother to show that she was widowed and alone ; but when He said, " Behold thy son," He did not commend that disciple to her, but He commended her to the disciple, as if to say, " I do not leave thee wholly deserted. That disciple shall fulfil My offices to thee ; he shall console thee, protect thee, support thee". Then He said to the disciple, " Behold thy mother". These

words are to be understood in a contrary sense, because of the difference of the persons ; for Christ does not now commend the disciple to the mother, but the mother to the disciple, as if to say, "Henceforth thou shalt have her as thy mother ; thou shalt cherish (*colo*) her, comfort her, protect her, support her (*ales*).

Verse 45. *Now from the sixth hour.*

We have now to meet the difficult question of the hour at which Christ was crucified. S. Mark (xv. 25) says that it was the third hour. Hence it has been concluded that, as there was darkness for three hours, Christ hung on the cross during that time, for the words of S. Mark are not contrary to those of S. Matthew. For although S. Matthew does not state directly at what hour Christ was crucified, yet when he says that the darkness happened at the sixth hour (after the distribution of His clothes, the blasphemies of the Jews as He was hanging on the cross, and the conversation of Christ and the thief), he shows that Christ was crucified before the sixth hour. But S. John appears to be at variance with S. Mark ; for S. John says (xix. 14), "And it was the parasceue of the Pasch, about the sixth hour". Christ, therefore, could not have been crucified at the third hour, as S. Mark says ; nor even at the sixth, when S. Matthew speaks of the darkness while He was on the cross ; for there were so many things done in the interval between His condemnation and crucifixion. He was brought by the soldiers into the hall. He was scourged, crowned with the thorns, clothed in the purple robe, mocked, and, lastly, led slowly to Calvary, as a man so greatly wearied and carrying his cross would necessarily be. All these things could not have been done in the space of one hour only. S. Augustin has solved the difficulty in two ways (*Tract. on S. John cxvi.*, and *De Consens.*, iii. 13).

1. At the third hour, as S. Mark says (xv. 25), Christ was crucified, not by the hands of the soldiers, but by the tongues of the Jews ; for it was at that hour that they cried out to Pilate, "Crucify Him ! crucify Him !" But this explanation does not appear to agree with the words of the Evangelists. For it is clear that S. Mark does not speak of that metaphorical crucifixion of tongues, but of the actual crucifixion ; for he speaks at once (xv. 24, 25) of His being crucified and of the division of His garments. Again, he had said just before (verses 13, 14) that the Jews cried out to Pilate, "Crucify Him !" Why should it have occurred to him to say a second time that Christ was crucified by the tongues of the Jews ? Lastly, it is clear from S. Matthew, S. Mark, and S. Luke that Christ was crucified before the sixth hour, for they all three say, *Eo jam crucifixo*, "When He was now crucified the darkness came". He could not have been crucified, therefore, at the sixth hour, and much less condemned by Pilate. Hence if one or other Evangelist requires to be explained—S. Mark or S. John—it must be S. John rather than S. Mark, for his opinion seems to be less in harmony with that of the others.

2. The second opinion of S. Augustin is that Christ was condemned at the sixth hour of the night, and not of the day, and that He was crucified at the third hour, not of the night, but of the day, as S. Mark says. S. John does not say absolutely that it was the sixth hour, but that it was about (*quasi*) the sixth hour of the Parasceue. The Parasceue was not only the day, but also the night ; or, as S. Augustin thinks, the night rather than the day. But S. Augustin himself thinks this idea less tenable than the other, and can be more easily refuted. We have said before, and it is certain from S. *Luke* xxii. 66, that the day had certainly dawned before Christ was brought to Pilate. But even if He had been condemned as soon as He was accused, He could not have been condemned at

the sixth hour ; and, besides, many things had happened before His condemnation, but after He was brought to Pilate. Pilate made many efforts to set Him free. He examined Him carefully as to whether He were the King of the Jews. He sent Him to Herod. Herod sent Him back. He scourged Him when sent back. Some have conjectured that the word "third" in *S. Mark* xv. 25 has got into the text from a mistake of the transcriber, and that for the third hour we should read the sixth. This may easily have happened from the resemblance of the Greek letters ϛ and γ, which represent three and six. But there is no evidence in support of this opinion, and we should not alter the text merely to meet a difficulty. And even if this conjecture were true, the passage would not be explained ; for, supposing *S. Mark* to have said that Christ was crucified at the sixth hour, how could He have been crucified then, as *S. John* says that He was condemned at that hour, and between His condemnation and crucifixion there must have been at least an hour ? How do *S. Matthew*, *S. Luke*, and even *S. Mark* himself, say that the darkness was at the sixth hour, when Christ had been crucified much before ? Again, *S. Mark* (verse 33) says, "When the sixth hour was come" (γενομένης δὲ ὥρας ἑκτῆς), when he had said before that Christ was crucified at the third hour, thus opposing the sixth hour to the third when Christ was crucified. For the word γενομένης (*facta*, "come") has the force here of meaning that it had not come before, and the particle δέ, "but," is a disjunctive one, by which *S. Mark* opposes that hour to the one in which he had said that Christ was crucified. If any passage has to be corrected, it should rather be, as some still think, that of *S. John*, that for the sixth we may read the third hour. But this, again, is not to correct, but to deprave Scripture, and the same question will remain : How could Christ have been condemned at the third hour, when *S. Mark* says that He was crucified



then, and at least one hour must have elapsed before His condemnation and crucifixion? The question is easy, and it would have been already answered by N. de Lyra if many, from over much curiosity and subtlety, had not made it difficult.

It has been observed on chap. xx. that the Hebrews divided the day into twelve hours, called by astronomers *usuales* and *inæquales*. These twelve hours they subdivided again into four parts, as they did with the night also, only that each division of the latter had its own military name of watch—*φυλακαί*, each soldier keeping guard for three hours. The four divisions of the day, each consisting of three hours, having no proper name of their own, received one from the end of the preceding division. The entire space of three hours, therefore, which intervened between sunrise and the third hour of the day was called the third hour, from the third hour, which was the last of that interval if described strictly and accurately. It was the custom of the Jews, as it is ours, to call the hours that follow by those that have last passed. Thus when the clock has struck twelve we call it noon till one o'clock; or at least until twelve is nearly over, though it is not properly noon, but one o'clock, or the first hour after noon; for the hour of noon is that which begins at eleven and ends at twelve.

When we speak of the time, therefore, between eleven and twelve, we sometimes call it eleven and sometimes twelve, at one time naming it from the beginning, and at another from the end of the hour. S. Mark and S. John speak in the same manner. For as Christ was condemned and crucified in the interval between the end of the third hour, which is the beginning of the sixth, and the end of the sixth, which is the beginning of the ninth, S. John, dating from the end of the third hour, calls it the sixth hour: S. Mark, dating from the beginning of that period,

calls it the third hour ; but because it is not likely that S. John would have called it the sixth hour until the time was getting on towards the end of the sixth hour, as we should not call it one o'clock until it was at least half-past twelve, it is to be supposed that Christ was condemned after half-past ten if we reckon by our own time ; for their third hour answered to our nine o'clock, their sixth to our twelve, and their third hour and half was our half-past ten. At that time, therefore, Christ was condemned, and S. John says that He was condemned about the sixth hour. He was crucified about an hour later, that is, about half-past eleven, which S. Mark calls the third hour, because the whole time between the third and sixth hours was called the third hour.

Christ had, therefore, been crucified one and a half hour when the darkness came on. His garments were then divided by the soldiers, the revilings of the Jews took place, and paradise was promised to the thief.

From this it follows that they are in error who think that Christ hung on the cross alive for six hours ; that is, from nine o'clock in the morning till the third hour after noon ; that is, three o'clock. By this account of time He could not have hung on the cross alive more than four hours ; for He was crucified after eleven o'clock, and at the ninth hour, that is, the third after noon, or shortly after, He expired ; as S. Matthew relates in verses 46 to 50.

Origen and Theophylact say that Christ was crucified at the same hour as that in which Adam fell, which was about noon ; others, that, at the hour of the expulsion of Adam from paradise, Christ opened the gates of it again.

S. Luke (xxiii. 44) says that it was almost the sixth hour ; not that it was not the sixth hour, but either he was not quite sure whether or not the sixth hour was completed, or he would not affirm that it was, he added the word "almost," as we do when we state the time, but it is of

no consequence to be exact. Both S. Matthew, in this place, and S. Mark (xv. 33) say : " When the sixth hour was come there was darkness over the whole earth until the ninth hour ". The three Evangelists say that it was the sixth hour—that is, midday—that the miracle might appear more wonderful ; for when the sun was at its height the darkness came, as Amos had foretold (viii. 9) : " And it shall come to pass in that day, saith the Lord God, that the sun shall go down at midday, and I will make the earth dark in the day of light ". They seemed opposite events, and therefore more wonderful, that the sun should be in the meridian and go down. The Evangelists probably named the sixth hour that no one might endeavour to obscure a miracle, so notable and clearer than the day, by saying that it was not true darkness, but that it was either morning or evening, and that the interposition of an unusually dense cloud made it appear that there was darkness when there was not really such.

*There was darkness.*

It may not have been a darkness as thick and dense as that of midnight, when there is neither sun nor moon, but such as that of a total eclipse of the sun ; for neither the Mother of Christ nor S. John left the place, nor the soldiers nor the other spectators, whom no love of Christ detained at the cross as it did the disciple and the Mother. For it would have been wonderful if during those three full hours the darkness had been as dense as night and they had not gone away. The Evangelists do not explain how the darkness was caused, and therefore we cannot know to any certainty. But we may conceive what is most likely. Some enemies of Christ, to magnify the miracle forsooth, have said that it was a simple eclipse, as Origen and S. Jerome inform us when treating of the passage. But they easily answer the objection and expose their ignorance.

It was the season of Pasch, which always falls on the fifteenth day of the first month, when the moon is at the full ; whereas an eclipse of the sun, which is caused by the irregularity of the natural course of the stars, can only happen when the moon is new, for then it is in conjunction with the sun and the earth, and intercepts the light of the sun. Others think that it was an eclipse, but a supernatural one. For when the moon was distant from the sun half the breadth of the heavens, as is the case when it is full, at the commandment of God it went back and returned to the place of the sun and darkened it, as happened at the prayer of King Ezechia, when the sun went back ten degrees. Origen and Dionysius the Areopagite were the authors of this opinion. The latter, when he was in Egypt with his attendant Apollophanes, has recorded, in his letter to S. Polycarp, that he saw that eclipse which was caused in contradiction to the laws of nature. This opinion is held by almost all Catholics and is very probable, *ipse per se*, without the weight of authority. The only point against it, as will be shown by and by, is the fact that the darkness was only seen in Judæa, and, therefore, that it could not have been visible in Egypt, a country so far distant. This objection shall, shortly, be answered. Others think that the sun was darkened by the subtraction of its rays ; as if it were astounded, as S. Jerome says, witnessing so shameful a deed. Others, again, hold that dense clouds were interspersed, as in the miraculous darkness in Egypt (*Exod. x. 22, 23*). Origen appears to have been of this opinion, and S. Chrysostom, in his *Hom. lxxxix. on S. Matt.* So also were Theophylact and Euthymius. It would not be foreign to our object to enquire why this darkness was sent ? Some think—*e.g.*, S. Leo (*Serm. x. de Pass. Dom.*)—that it was to signify the blindness of the Jews ; others, as S. Jerome, that it was to show the detestation felt by God for wickedness so flagrant.

Others say that it was sent to show that Christ, the Sun of Righteousness, had set (*Amos* viii. 9; S. Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catech. Comm.*, xiii.).

Others, still, that it was to declare the divine wrath. This opinion seems the more reasonable, because it is in agreement with other passages of Scripture (so *Jer.* xv. 9; *Ezek.* xxxii. 7, 8; *Joel* ii. 10, 30, 31; iii. 14, 15). It might be thought that these and the other miracles which took place at the death of Christ were performed to bear testimony to His Divinity. For, as before said, God so willed His Son to be condemned, so willed Him to die, that in that very condemnation, in the ignominy of the cross, in His very death itself, not only His innocence, but also His Divinity, should especially shine forth: lest, if He had died without miracles, He might have been thought a mere man; and the rather because He closed His life hanging on the cross, and He did not come down from it when the Jews cried out to Him, "If Thou be the Son of God," &c. By the most wise counsel of God, therefore, so many and great miracles were opposed to the cross, that our faith, which might have been weakened by the ignominy of the cross, might be strengthened by the multitude and greatness of them.

Another question on the subject is: How far the darkness extended? S. Matthew says, "Over the whole earth"; and SS. Mark and Luke say the same in other words. Thus many good authorities, such as S. Chrysostom, Euthymius, Theophylact, think that the darkness extended over the whole world. In confirmation of this idea, we may cite the letter of Dionysius to Polycarp, stating that he saw it in Egypt. The opinion of Origen, however, seems more tenable, that it only extended over Judæa, and that it was sent for the Jews only, and to those places in which Christ had preached the Gospel, that so His Divinity and doctrine might be confirmed. It is also very unlikely that none

of all the many Greek and Latin historians should have recorded an event so remarkable, if it had extended and had been known throughout the entire world.

Again, it was not possible that there should have been darkness over the whole earth at that sixth hour, when in the central parts of the earth it was night ; and in many others where it was day, it could not be the sixth hour, that is, noon. For this happens in different countries at different times ; and it is evident that the Evangelists not only wished to relate the miracle, but that it happened at the sixth hour, that is, noon, when the miracle would be greater. In those countries, then, where it was not noon at that time, that miracle was not wrought.

But, then, how do the three Evangelists say that the darkness was over the whole earth ? Origen answers rightly, that the word " whole " is to be applied to, and understood of, the place in question in which the event happened. The event happened in Judæa : the darkness therefore happened throughout the whole of Judæa. So in 3 *Kings* xviii. 10. When Abdias found the prophet, he had certainly not been into all kingdoms, but into all the parts of his own kingdom. So again *S. Luke* ii. 1. The whole world was not literally enrolled, for Cæsar was not master of this, but all those parts of it within which the Roman Empire was contained. But how was it that S. Dionysius saw the darkness in Egypt ? for neither his authority nor the authenticity of his letter is to be given up. The darkness was probably caused by the total opposition of the moon ; and therefore in Judæa, where the eclipse was full, the darkness was great ; but in other places, where the moon did not conceal the whole sun, it was less, as each country was more or less distant from Jerusalem. Dionysius, therefore, in Egypt could see the eclipse, but not the great darkness that was in Judæa, although he says that he saw the great darkness—great, that is, probably as compared with other dark-

ness: such as that which happens at the eclipse of the sun. But, then, why has no Greek or Latin historian mentioned the event? One has done so, for Origen mentions Phlegontes, the author of *Egyptian Chronicles*, who described it.

Verse 46. *And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice.*

This ninth hour answers, as has been said, to our three in the afternoon. S. Mark says: *Exclamavit voce magna*. He increases the force of the cry by the addition of *ex* to the verb, and by the words *magna voce*, by epitasis. So S. Paul (*Heb.* v. 7). That Christ, when at the point of death, could cry with a loud voice surpasses human nature. For the voice of the dying, or even of those in dread of death, is apt to fail at the outset. Christ, although He was dying as man, yet, as God, was able to cry with a loud voice, *supra hominem*. His having thus cried out cannot be thought void of a reason and mystery. Origen thinks that it was to show that there was a great mystery in His death. This would not have been without probability had he not turned the whole into an allegory. He supposes the voice to have been great, not because it was loud and strong, but because it was full of teaching and mystery. For every voice of Christ is great. Euthymius thinks that Christ cried with a loud voice to show that He truly suffered of His own free-will. But this would rather tend to prove that He did not suffer at all, as He was able to cry out with so powerful a voice. It may rather be thought that His reason was that all who were present might recognise the words of *Psalms* xxi., and see that He was the Christ of whom it was written: *Eli, Eli, lama Sabacthani*. S. Mark (xv. 34), by a slight alteration, reads Eloi, but it is the same Hebrew word. They expressed *Deus meus* by both Eli and Eloi. It is easy to understand that Christ

might have used either expression ; but as He was reciting the Psalm, we must suppose that He did not say Eloi, but Eli, as written therein. The bystanders, too, thought that He called for Elias, which they would not so readily have done had He said *Eloi*, instead of *Eli, Eli, lama Sabacthani*, למה שבקתני. This is Syriac, which language was then used by the Jews. The Hebrew is עזבתני. They are the words of David in his complaint against God of being deserted by Him in adversity. The words that follow are רחיק מישועתי דברי שאגתי *longe a salute mea verba rugitus mei* ; that is, “ my complaints before Thee are far from bringing me any salvation and deliverance”. From the similarity of the Hebrew word the LXX. have rendered *rugitus παραπτώμάτων, delictorum*, that is, “ I cry to Thee for safety, but my sins cry to Thee against it, so that I am far from it”. But as the whole psalm was written of Christ, as we see from verses 17, 19, which can apply to no other, it cannot be doubted, that when David uttered these words, he had regard to Christ. Christ, then, when dying uttered the beginning of the psalm to show that He was the Christ of whom the psalm speaks.

But here arises another question. How could Christ say that He was forsaken by God? Calvin is not to be listened to who says that He suffered all the pains of the condemned, among which was utter despair. Christ's own words disprove this: “ Into Thy hands I commend My spirit ” (*Ps.* xxx. 6). Nor was it either necessary or possible that He should suffer all the punishments of the lost, or He must have blasphemed God, and done other things which these do, and which, although committed of their free-will, are punishments of sin. Nor, again, was He required to undergo the heavy punishments which many of His martyrs have endured for Him. For it was not the greatness of His punishment, which, however great it was, could not compare with the multitude and greatness of our



sins, but the condition of His Person which satisfied God; for whatever it was that God suffered, it was so great that it satisfied even an angry God.

The ancient Fathers, although they explain the words in different manners, yet all claim His own glory for Christ. Their most general explanation is that He spoke them not in His own Person, but in ours—that is in the person of all sinners. For when the Arians brought this passage forward in depreciation of the Divinity of Christ, and said that He was so far from being God, that He cried out that He was forsaken by God—all Catholic Fathers answered that He cried out not for Himself, but for us whom He saw to be deserted by God, and alienated from Him, and whom He desired to restore to His favour. So say S. Athanasius (*Orat. i., ii., and Serm. iii., iv., cont. Arian., and Quod Deus de Deo*); S. Gregory Nazianzen (*Orat. iv. de Theolog.*); S. Cyril Alexandria (*De Fid. ad Reg.*); S. Augustin (*Ps. xxi.*); S. Leo (*Serm. xvi. de Pass.*); S. John Damascene (*De Fide, iii. 2, 24*), and Euthymius (*in loc.*). “Hence it is,” says S. Leo, “that our Head, the Lord Jesus Christ, transforming all the members of His Body into Himself, what He had formerly ejaculated in the psalm, that He repeated on the cross in the voice of their Redeemer: ‘My God, My God, look upon me, why hast Thou forsaken me?’” He confirms this opinion by the words of S. Augustin which immediately follow, “Far from Thy salvation are the words of my sins,” which can apply to us, but cannot to Christ.

Others think that Christ called Himself forsaken by the Father, because when He was in the form of God, by the decree of the Father He “emptied Himself and assumed the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of man; and being found in fashion as a man, when He had undergone so many and great punishments, He, as it were, repented that He had been made man”. This is the opinion of Origen, and one not apparently very tenable.

The opinion of those who say that Christ spoke those words as man, for Himself, as He had said to the Father, "Father, if it be possible," &c., seems better. For as He was both God and man, so, as we have said before, God permitted the manhood so to suffer (restraining, as it were, the Godhead) as if He had been a mere man. Thus, although He was God, He prayed as a mere man. Like a mere man He complained that He was deserted by God. Not that He thought Himself so, for He soon after commended His spirit into His hands, but that He felt Himself suffering as if He had been. Hence He cried out like a man deserted by God, "My God, My God," to express the person of a man suffering the most extreme punishment and deserted by God. This is the opinion of Tertullian (*Adv. Prax.*), S. Hilary (*Can. xxxiii. on S. Matt.*), S. Epiphanius (*Her. lxix.*), S. Cyril (*Thesaurus*, x. 2), S. Ambrose (*Comment. x. on S. Luke*, and *De Fide*, i. 6), S. Jerome (*in loc.*). But S. Hilary and S. Ambrose are to be received with caution; for they explain it as if when Christ died His Godhead was separated from His soul and body. "The man," they say, "when on the point of death, cried out from the separation of the Divinity." They doubtless meant, not that His Godhead was truly separated from the body and soul of Christ, but that He so suffered and so died as if it had been.

Verse 47. *And some that stood there and heard, said, This man calleth Elias.*

It is uncertain who these were. Theophylact supposes them to have been Jews; not the Priests, or Scribes, or Pharisees, or others who understood, or professed to understand, the Scriptures, but the ordinary unlearned people, who had no knowledge of them, and therefore thought that Christ had called for Elias. Others say that they were learned Jews, or Priests, or Scribes, or Pharisees, who not

from ignorance of Scripture, but from forwardness, and from making the resemblance of Eli to Elias a pretext for ridicule, said, "He calleth for Elias". This opinion finds favour with S. Jerome and Bede. Others, again, think that they were the Roman soldiers, who from ignorance of Hebrew, as S. Jerome, Bede, Strabo, and Euthymius suppose, or from the license of mirth, said, "He calleth for Elias". For their intention we cannot speak, but it may be safely affirmed that they were soldiers, because S. Matthew and S. Mark say that they who said, "He calleth for Elias," or one of them, immediately offered Christ the vinegar. S. Luke (xxiii. 36) and S. John (xix. 29) say that they who did this were Roman soldiers.

Verse 48. *And immediately one of them running took a sponge, and filled it with vinegar.*

S. Matthew (here) and S. Mark (xv. 36) seem to say that it was one of the soldiers who ran and offered the vinegar, because Christ was thought to have called for Elias. This seems scarcely in harmony with the history, for what had Elias to do with vinegar? S. John explains it more fully: "Afterwards Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished," that is, that He had now suffered all things that the Father had determined, and that nothing remained but that He should give up His life, "that the Scripture"—that is, that the prophecy of David—"might be fulfilled" (*Ps.* lxviii. 22), "said, 'I thirst'". By these words He declared His thirst, of which David had spoken, and He showed that the time was now come when the vinegar should be offered to Him.

It may appear strange that there should have been vinegar at that place, and at hand to be given to Christ. S. John says that it was there. It was no doubt placed there according to custom, for vinegar was given to men crucified or about to be fixed on the cross. The reason of this has caused some speculation among commentators.

Theophylact, whom all the more recent authors follow, says that it was given that the criminal might die and be released from his sufferings the quicker. It may rather be thought that it was given to sustain the spirits, if any man, from fear of death, before being nailed to the cross, were seized with faintness. It is still used for that purpose in cases of execution or phlebotomy. But as Christ was hanging on the cross, and the vinegar could not be given out of a vessel, a sponge was wetted with it, and offered Him on a reed. S. John speaks of hyssop. Some have thought that it was a stalk of hyssop, as Euthymius (*On S. John* xix.) says, "because although hyssop is a mere shrub with us, in Judæa it grows to the size of a small tree." But this hardly seems probable, for neither Pliny nor Dioscorides, nor any other botanical writer, has mentioned this, and the author of the Books of Kings says the contrary. He tells us that Solomon treated of trees, from the cedar that is in Libanus unto the hyssop that comes out of the wall (3 *Kings* iv. 33). The opinion of Theophylact is preferable that S. John called the reed hyssop, from some resemblance to the uppermost leaves of the herb, but the question is where is the resemblance to be found? Some say that the sponge was bound round the reed by hyssop, *hyssopo* being not the dative but the ablative of the instrument. S. John may not have meant that the sponge was placed about the hyssop as about a reed, on which the vinegar might be offered, but as a medicament which was given to the dying with vinegar. So the soldiers first bound the hyssop round the reed, and then placed the sponge about the hyssop, as S. John says, that Christ might thus take the juice of the hyssop with the vinegar.

Verse 49. *And the others said.*

S. Mark (xv. 36) says that the words that follow were spoken, not by the others, but by the man who ran to give

the vinegar. It has been thought that the passage is corrupt, and that it should not be read λέγων ἄφετε, but οἱ δὲ λοιποὶ ἔλεγον; but the rest said, "Let be," *sinete*, as S. Matthew reads. These maintain that the words οἱ δὲ λοιποὶ have fallen out of the text of S. Mark, and that for ἔλεγον has been substituted λέγων, and ἄφετε for ἄφες. They support their opinion by the Syriac and some Greek copies of S. Mark which read as above; and because S. Mark relates the Passion of Christ, not only generally as S. Matthew does, but he almost always uses the same words. We should not venture, however, to alter Scripture without stronger proofs than this. The proverb, *Ne moveas lineam*, "Move not the line," ought to be kept to. Certainly S. Augustin (*De Consens.*, iii. 17) read the passage of S. Mark as we do, though he does not attempt to solve the difficulty. The correction does not appear in any way necessary to the reconciliation of the Evangelists; for the words of S. Matthew, "The others said, Let be, let us see whether Elias will come to deliver Him," are apparently to be referred not to verse 48 but 47. For the Evangelist does not oppose the others to him who ran and filled the sponge with vinegar, but to those who said, "This man calleth Elias," as if he had said, "Some said, 'This man calleth Elias,' but others said, 'Let be, let us see,'" &c. He who ran, as S. Mark says, and filled the sponge may have been one of these. If it be objected that they do not say *sinite* but *sine*, the answer is that it is a Hebraism, by which, even when more than one was spoken of, they used the singular, saying סנה *sine*. S. Mark, however, who says that one especially, as speaking with the others, uttered those words, does not say that he used the expression *sine* but *sinete*. What is this to the vinegar? It seems to confirm the idea that the speakers addressed not him who offered the vinegar, but all in common. As they saw that Christ was dying, and

thought, or pretended to think, that He called upon Elias, they wished to recruit His strength by the vinegar, and to see whether He would die before Elias came to deliver Him. One of those, therefore, who said, "Let be," ran for the vinegar. The reason of their pretending to think that Elias would come, may have been that it was a common opinion among the Jews, and a true one, that, before the coming of Christ, Elias would appear (*vid.* xi. 14; xvii. 10, 11); and although these were Roman soldiers, from having lived among the Jews, they had some knowledge of their belief on the subject, and spoke from it.

Verse 50. *And Jesus again crying with a loud voice.*

Christ had so cried before (verse 46). Hence the force of the word "again". So *S. Mark* xv. 37. The carefulness of the Evangelists in relating this shows that there was some mystery in it which may be worth enquiring into. The Ancients give many and probable explanations of it. Origen (*Tract.* xxxv. *in Matt.*) says that it was that Christ might show that He died not in fear, but in confidence and with security, as one who knew that after death He would be placed at the right hand of the Father, and receive a name that is above every name. S. Cyril of Jerusalem (*Catech.*, xiii.), S. Chrysostom (*Hom.* xxxix.), S. Jerome, Euthymius, and Theophylact (*in loc.*) think that it was to show that He died, not from any necessity of nature, but from His own will, dying with so loud a cry. Euthymius says that even with His last breath, as He had done through His whole life, He professed that He and the Father were One, commending His spirit to Him. Some say that He cried with the loud voice that all might understand how far He had humbled Himself for the sins of men. S. Ambrose, in his *Commentary on S. Luke* xxiii., is the author of this idea. Christ appears to have desired, as we have said before, by this, as by His other miracles, to show

His Divinity, that He who could supernaturally cry with a loud voice at the last moment of life might be believed in as more than man. The event that followed confirms this opinion. For S. Mark says (xv. 39) that the centurion said, "Indeed, this man was the Son of God". We know from S. Luke alone what Christ said, "Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit". Christ evidently calls His soul His spirit.

He commended His soul, therefore, to His Father, not in the sense in which holy men do when they die, nor even in that of S. Stephen (*Acts* vii. 58), "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit". For men commend their souls to God, that He may not destroy them, but make them partakers of everlasting life. Christ did not so, for He knew that He could not be lost, and He had no sin for the forgiveness of which He must pray to the Father; but He commended His soul to Him that He might not leave it in hell, whither He was about to descend, nor suffer His holy one to see corruption, as David said of Christ (*Psa.* xv. 10).

In a word, as He was to remain dead three days, which He would pass in hell, He deposits His soul, which He would receive again, in the hands of His Father, or, as He says Himself, commends it to Him. So one who was going a three days' journey would give into the keeping of his most trusted friend whatever he especially valued, saying, "I commend this to thy care". So Tertullian (*Cont. Prax.*) and S. Ambrose (*On S. Luke* xxiii.) explain these words of Christ. Christ took them from *Psalms* xxx. 6, and applied to Himself, with a change of meaning, what David had said of himself. David commended to God, not his soul, but his life, which he meant by the word "spirit" (*Psa.* xxx. 6); but Christ calls His soul His spirit. The prayer of David, too, is conditional, as if he had said, "As often as," or, "If I commend my life into Thy hands, although I be in extreme peril of death, Thou hast

redeemed me"; that is, "Thou wilt redeem me," and as Thou hast promised to be present with me, so wilt Thou do; but Christ's prayer was not conditional, but absolute.

*Yielded up the ghost.*

This expression also shows that the death of Christ was not compulsory, but voluntary; as S. Ambrose, S. Jerome, and Bede have observed. S. Ambrose says, "He gave up His spirit, and He gave it up well, for He did not lose it against His will". In fine, S. Matthew says that He yielded up His spirit (*emisit*). But what is yielded up (*emittitur*) is given voluntarily; what is lost (*amittitur*) is involuntary. So says S. John (xix. 30): "Bowing His head, He gave up the ghost". His meaning is that Christ bowed His head, not of necessity, but of His own free-will, as being about to lay down His life gently. We must not suppose, however, that Christ gave up His spirit in that great cry, for, as S. Matthew and S. Mark say, He first cried out, and then, in the words of S. John, "bowing His head, He gave up the ghost". There is no ambiguity here in S. Matthew's using the aorist tense κράξας—κράξας φωνῇ μεγάλῃ ἀφῆκε τὸ πνεῦμα, *cum clamasset voce magna emisit spiritum*. S. Mark speaks much more hesitatingly: ἀφελὲς φωνὴν μεγάλην, *emittens vocem magnam*. We must explain this by S. Matthew: "yielded up," *emittens*; that is, *cum emisisset*, "when He had sent forth". Euthymius thinks that Christ commended His Mother to S. John between that great cry and His giving up His spirit. The contrary appears to be the fact from S. John, who says that He had done this a long time before. For he says that Christ, before He bowed His head and died, cried out, "It is finished". The followers of Luther and Calvin strangely pervert the meaning of this word, as if it had been the intention of Christ to take away the Sacrifice of the Eucharist and all our satisfaction, and meant to say



that all sacrifices are now ended, and none are to be offered henceforth ; for all satisfaction and all our sanctification were now perfected.

But Christ did not speak of the satisfaction of sacrifice, but of His own Passion. He meant that this was completed ; that is, that all that He had to suffer was completed, and nothing remained to be done but to lay down His life, which He had only taken that He might die, and had only kept to that end.

For these words are to be explained according to the harmony of time, place, and the subject matter. It was the season of the Passion. Christ was hanging on the cross. He had endured all the punishment He had to endure for us. He said, "It is finished" ; that is, there is nothing now remaining for Me to suffer. As if his friend should say to a patient who had to undergo amputation of his limbs, when the operation was over : "It is done ; you have borne all ; there is nothing more". In short, Christ only meant what S. Paul says (*Rom.* vi. 9). Granting for a moment that Christ spoke of the sacrifices and figures of the Old Law, as certainly many even of the Ancients understood it ; as if He had said, "It is finished," that is, all the prophecies and figures of the Old Law are fulfilled which (as we shall show on verse 47) was signified by the rending of the veil : yet what has this to do with the taking away of the Sacrifice of the Eucharist ? what to the taking away of the satisfaction of good works ? The Ancients who received the above explanation believed both these doctrines. But the Moderns explain the words in question to mean that : "There is nothing now to be done either by us or by them to insure our salvation". If so, why do we believe ? why are we baptised ? why do we take the Eucharist ? why are good works required of us even after the death of Christ, if we are absolutely saved only by those three words, "It is finished" ?

There is another meaning latent in these words. Christ showed that He was willing to die then, and not before, and not after ; for He died not by any law of nature, but by His own will and for the sake of His office, and as He meant to satisfy the Father's will and decree ; and as He had not satisfied these before, He would not die before ; but when He had satisfied them, even though nature required Him to live some time longer, yet, lest He might appear to live even a few hours to no purpose after He had discharged His office, He willed to die. This is the meaning of " It is finished " ; as if He had said, " The time is come for Me to lay down My life ". And thus Pilate, not understanding the mystery, wondered that He was dead already (*S. Mark* xv. 44). Their opinion cannot be assented to who say that Christ, because He had endured greater sufferings throughout the night than the thieves, therefore died sooner than they. To increase the sufferings of Christ they diminished the mystery.

Verse 51. *And behold.*

S. Augustin (*De Consens.*, iii. 19) rightly concludes that the word " behold " means that immediately upon Christ having given up His spirit the veil of the Temple was rent ; so that His death is proved to have been the cause of the rending of the veil, and, therefore, that when S. Luke (xxiii. 45) unites this with the darkness which happened while Christ was still alive, he does so by anticipation.

*The veil of the Temple was rent in two from the top even to the bottom.*

S. Mark (xv. 39) writes to the same effect. It is a mystery the meaning of which has been differently explained by different authorities.

1. The greater number say that it was that the ancient sacraments and types, which scarcely the most learned of

the Doctors of the Law understood, were rent and laid open that all might penetrate into the very *Sanctum Sanctorum*, which had been separated by the veil — that is, into the very *penetralia* and most secret and occult mysteries of the Old Law ; for what appertained to the Hebrews in figure we, by the taking away of the veil, look upon, as S. Paul says, with open face (2 *Cor.* iii. 18). Origen (*Tract.* xxxvi. *on S. Matt.*), S. Ambrose (x., *On S. Luke*), S. Jerome (*in loc.*), S. Cyril Alexandria (x. 37, *On S. John*), Theodoret (*Orat.* ix. *on Dan.*), S. Augustin (*On Ps.* lxiv., lxx. ; *Cont. Faust.*, xii. 11 ; and *Serm.* iv. *de Verb. Dom. sec. Joan.*), S. Leo (*Serm.* x. *de Pass.*), Sedulius, and others are the authorities for this opinion.

2. Others think that the words signified the abrogation of the Synagogue. So S. Augustin (*De Temp.*, cxiv.).

3. Others that the Passion of Christ was ended. For the flesh of Christ was signified by the veil of the Temple. And by the rending of the veil was meant either the piercing of His body, or the separation from it of His soul. So S. Cyril Jerusalem (*Cat.* xiii.); Theodoret (*Dial.* i. *de Impatib.*).

4. Others say that the veil was as the clothing of the Temple ; and as the Jews, when in affliction, used to rend their clothes, so the Temple, like one mourning, rent its veil on the death of Christ. Sedulius thus expresses it (*Carm.* v.) :

“ Illud ovans templum, majoris culmina Templi  
Procubuisse videns, ritu plangentis alumni  
Saucia discisso nudavit pectora vela ”.

That glorious Temple, seeing then the height  
Of a far nobler Temple overthrown,  
Like to a mourning follower rent its veil  
Baring its wounded breast.

5. Others take it as foreshowing the division and dispersion of the Jews (S. Hilary, *Can.* xxxiii. *on S. Matt.*).

6. Others that the Temple, which had been holy hitherto, would henceforth be profaned. This is said by Theophylact.

7. Others that the way of the Holies was laid open ; as S. Paul says (*Heb.* ix. 8). That is, the gate of heaven was opened to us, which before the death of Christ was closed. and henceforth all who would might enter it. For the veil of the Temple was opposed, that no one but the high priest might enter into the Holy of Holies, and that only once a year, and not without blood : which was also a figure of heaven (*Heb.* ix. 24, 25). This interpretation with the above—No. 1—as having the most authorities, seems the best.

*And the earth quaked and the rocks were rent.*

That there was some mystery here cannot be doubted, though not the same as in the rending of the veil. It is probable that Christ showed His Divinity by these two events. The divine presence and majesty is shown by the earthquake and the rending of the rocks, as in *Ps.* lxvii. 8, 9 ; *xcvii.* 7-9 ; *xcviii.* 1 ; *cxiii.* 6, 7 ; *Joel* ii. 10. The divine wrath that was hanging over the Jews may also have been signified (*Joel* iii. 16 ; *Aggeus* ii. 22, 23 ; *Ps.* xlv. 7). A question may be raised as to the extent of the earthquake, like that of the darkness. Origen thinks that, like the darkness, it extended only over Judæa. The author of the book on the miracles of Scripture, falsely ascribed to S. Augustin, says (ii. 3) that it extended farther, and overthrew eleven cities in Thrace. It does not seem probable, however, that eleven cities should have been destroyed in a country where the people were innocent, and none in Judæa, the seat of the crime.

Verse 52. *And the graves were opened.*

It does not appear clearly from the Evangelists at what time the graves were opened. S. Chrysostom (*in loc.*)

thinks that it was while Christ was yet living, because they who rose accompanied Christ to hell. This does not seem to agree with the words of the Evangelist, who, although he does not say that the tombs were opened immediately after Christ's death, yet clearly implies that such was the fact. Theophylact, more in accordance with the history, thinks that it took place then, when also the veil was rent, the earth quaked, and the rocks were divided. But there is this difficulty. As the tombs were opened only that the dead might rise, or to testify that they had risen, and those dead rose only by their resurrection to bear witness to the Resurrection of Christ, it would appear useless that they should have risen before Christ did so. For what could they have done in the meantime? Again, it seems most probable that Christ visited those who rose while they were yet in Hades, as He did the other dead who were there, and took them with Him thence, that they might rise with Him when He rose. Lastly, in verse 53, S. Matthew says: "And coming out of the tombs after His resurrection, came into the holy city and appeared to many". The words seem to imply that they rose only after Christ's Resurrection. From these premisses Origen, S. Jerome, and Bede conclude that they rose after the Resurrection of Christ; although the two last think that the tombs were opened immediately after His death, though the dead did not rise till after the Resurrection of Christ. But why were the tombs opened immediately if the dead were not to rise? It may appear more probable that the tombs were not opened, and that the dead did not rise until after Christ had risen; but that S. Matthew, when He began to relate the miracles which happened on the death of Christ, joined this also to the others, the cause of which, as of the rest, was the death of Christ.

Why those dead rose is a question that may rightly be asked. The answer would not be difficult. Christ desired to

have companions and witnesses of His Resurrection : for if He had risen alone He might have been thought a phantom ; but when He had others with Him, who rose at the same time as He did, He could easily show that He could rise, because He raised them.

For this reason they who rose are said to have appeared to many in the city. This was a proof of singular love. For He chose to die alone who would not rise alone. For the thieves who were crucified with Him were not crucified by Him, but by their own crimes. But they who were raised with Him were raised by Him. His death was the cause of our resurrection : the cause of our death is ourselves.

It has been asked whether they who rose again with Christ died again ? It is the opinion of Theophylact that they did. The opinion of those Moderns who think that they did not, but were taken by Christ to heaven with Him, seems better. For what would they have done among the living who had received a taste of the divine glory ? Their condition would have been worse than if they had never been raised at all ; for they would have been recalled from Abraham's bosom, where they were in rest, and brought back to a life of turbulence, to remain in it for some time, and then to die again. And what if, in the bosom of Abraham, where we must believe them to have been, as the Evangelist calls them saints, they were certain of salvation, while in this life they were not so, for they might sin again ? If they had risen to die again they would have appeared not to many, as the Evangelist says, but to all. For they would have lived among men as they did before they died, and as Lazarus did after He had been raised by Christ. But now that, as the Evangelist says, they appeared to many, he signifies clearly that they did not appear in common to all, but only to those to whom the Resurrection of Christ was to be confirmed. And

even Christ Himself, because He was not to die again, but shortly to return into the heavens, was not seen by all, but only by the Apostles and other faithful witnesses, as S. Peter says (*Acts* x. 41); nor did He live with them after His death as He had done before it, daily, and in an ordinary manner; but He now appeared, now disappeared.

Verse 53. *Came into the holy city and appeared to many.*

Jerusalem was called the Holy City, not as being so at that time—for it had recently been defiled by the blood of Christ—but because it had formerly possessed the Temple of Solomon and the Holy of Holies. So S. Jerome and Bede explain it. In like manner, S. Matthew, after he became a disciple of Christ, was still called a publican, because he had been one before. Why they did not appear to all has been explained in the preceding verse.

Verse 54. *Now the centurion and they that were with him watching Jesus, having seen the earthquake and the things that were done, were sore afraid, saying: Indeed this was the Son of God.*

S. Mark (xv. 39) gives another reason for the excessive fear of the centurion and the soldiers: "And the centurion who stood over against Him, seeing that, crying out in this manner, He had given up the Ghost, said: Indeed this man was the Son of God". Each cause, we may believe, moved the centurion—the great cry, the darkness, the earthquake, and the other miracles which S. Luke (xxiii. 47) describes in a few words: "Now, the centurion, seeing what was done, glorified God, saying: Indeed this was a just man". The fear of the soldiers is not difficult of explanation. They feared lest the divine vengeance should be directed against those who had been instrumental in so unjust a death; for they acknowledged Christ to be the Son of God,

who, they thought, would not suffer the death of His Son to be unpunished. S. Luke says that the centurion glorified God and confessed Christ to be indeed the Son of God. The Hebrew expression, "to glorify God," means to give glory to Him, to acknowledge our offence or His glory and majesty, as *S. John* ix. 24; *Joshua* vii. 19.

*Indeed this was the Son of God.*

So S. Mark. But S. Luke says: "Indeed this was a just man" (xxiii. 47). S. Augustin (*De Consens.*, iii. 20) explains the difference by saying that the centurion either said both—that Christ was the Son of God, and was a just man—and S. Matthew has related one, and S. Luke the other; or S. Luke wished to explain in what sense the centurion called Christ the Son of God—that is, not that he thought Him such by nature, but in that sense in which all just men are called the sons of God (*Ps.* lxxxix. 6). This opinion of S. Augustin is probable; but it is more likely that the centurion applied both expressions to Him, considering a just man the son of God. Not perhaps that he called Christ a just man in the ordinary sense—for these miracles did not take place at the death of other righteous men—but he called Him just, as He was called by others who believed in Him. My own firm opinion is that the centurion was moved by the multitude and greatness of His miracles to believe in Christ. S. Luke, moreover, says that the whole multitude of them "that came together to that sight, beholding the things which were done, smote their breasts and returned" (xxiii. 48). They returned as if acknowledging their fault, and abhorring the wickedness of that innocent death.

Verse 55. *And there were many women afar off.*

S. Mark says the same. S. Luke adds, "And all his acquaintance" (xxiii. 49). This, however, cannot be taken in a general sense, as the disciples had almost all fled. But



as there were women present who were known to Him, and as S. John was among them (xix. 26), S. Luke said that "all His acquaintance were there," not meaning, probably, that all were present, but that all that were so stood afar off. This is not opposed to what S. John says (xix. 25), that the Mother of Christ and the beloved disciple stood by the cross. For they were both near the cross and afar off—near, to see His sufferings and hear Him speak to them ; and afar off, because they were not so close to the cross as the soldiers who had the custody of Christ, and the multitude of Jews who passed their revilings upon them. The expression of S. Matthew, "afar off," does not imply that the women who were near the cross came from a distance, for this is asserted soon after: "And the women that were come with Him from Galilee following after saw the sepulchre and how His body was laid," but that they were afar off from the cross ; which is also the meaning of the Greek *μάκροθεν θεωρούσαι*.

*Who had followed Jesus from Galilee, ministering unto Him.*

The Evangelist describes a threefold office of these devout women: 1. They were where the Apostles who had said that they would die with Christ dared not be. 2. They had left their homes and country in Galilee and followed Christ. 3. They ministered to Him. They did this by attending on Him and supplying Him with things needful, as related by S. Luke (viii. 3). Because faithful men were wanting, it pleased God to raise up women to be witnesses both of the death and burial of Christ ; for even the Apostles would have been unable to assure us that Christ had truly risen from the dead unless for these women, who could declare to His having been truly dead and truly buried. The death and burial of Christ are proved by the word and testimony of the women ; His resurrection by those of the Apostles.

Verse 56. *Among whom was.*

S. Luke implies that there were many more. S. Matthew only names three, both because these were more known and had been more active in their ministrations, and because, while the rest were absent, these kept their stations to the end of the burial, as in verse 61. We except the Mother of Christ, than whom none was better known, and none more zealous in attendance upon Him. She was not at His burial, perhaps because John, to whom she had been commended by Christ before His death, had taken her to his home, lest she should die of grief.

*Mary Magdalene.*

The sister of Lazarus and Martha (*S. John* xi. 5), as is the general belief, though some think (from *S. Luke* viii. 2) that she was of Galilee, and had no connection with Lazarus. Out of her Christ had cast seven devils (*S. Luke* viii. 2).

*And Mary, the mother of James and Josés.*

In the Greek *Ἰωσὴ* (Jose). She was the sister of the Mother of the Lord, as has been shown chaps. x. 3, xii. 46. S. John says (xix. 25): "Now there stood by the cross of Jesus His Mother and His Mother's sister, Mary of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene". Mary, the wife of Cleophas, and Mary, the mother of James and Josés, was the same person. She is called Cleophæ from her husband, and Jacobi and Jose from her sons. This James was the Apostle. He was called "James the Less". He is the author of the Epistle, and he is called "the brother of the Lord," and "the son of Alphæus". He was the first bishop of Jerusalem, as stated on chap. x. 3. Alphæus was the cognomen of Cleophas, the father of James.

*And the mother of the sons of Zebedee.*

S. Mark (xv. 40) calls her by another name—Salome. To this is to be referred what S. John has related (xix.

31 to 37) but the other Evangelists have passed over : " Then the Jews, because it was the parasceue, that the bodies might not remain upon the cross on the Sabbath day (for that was a great Sabbath day), besought Pilate that their legs might be broken and that they might be taken away". We have spoken of the parasceue and the great Sabbath day on chap. xxvi. 2. The unwillingness of the Jews to allow the bodies to remain on the cross on the Sabbath day was a senseless and revolting piece of hypocrisy. They did not think it contrary to religion to crucify the innocent Christ, to go to Pilate on the very day of Pasch, to ask him for soldiers to guard the tomb, to seal the stone ; but they did think it so to leave the bodies on the cross that day. S. John adds : " The soldiers therefore came, and they broke the legs of the first and of the other that was crucified with him " (verse 32). It was apparently the custom to break at times the legs of those who were crucified, that they might die more speedily. This cannot be considered a singular event, for in this case the Jews would scarcely have ventured to make application to Pilate.

S. John proceeds : " But after they were come to Jesus, when they saw that He was already dead, they did not break His legs ; but one of the soldiers with a spear opened His side, and immediately there came out blood and water". This piercing of the side of Christ was done at once by the insolence of the soldier and the divine counsel. Of the former, as he took it amiss that Christ had died in so short a time, and had escaped his intended torture, and the contumelies of the Jews and the soldiers. When, therefore, he found that he could not torment the living he insulted the dead. The divine design ordered it that blood and water, the symbols of our salvation, should flow thence, as all the ancient authorities agree. For we are redeemed by the blood of Christ, and washed by the waters of baptism, with which, as it were, His blood is

mingled. By the blood the Eucharist, by which we are nourished, and by the waters of Baptism, by which we are born, the two chief sacraments of our salvation are signified. Christ is therefore said to have come through water and blood. There are three witnesses who bear testimony to Christ on earth (1 S. *John* v. 6)—the Spirit, the water, and the blood. The Spirit who descended upon Christ and testified that He was the Son of God; the water and the blood which issued from His side after His death. This, as it was not merely human, showed Him to be, not a mere man, but God. S. Cyril of Jerusalem has treated fully of this in his thirteenth Catechetical Lecture. The assertion of Calvin, therefore, on the subject is profane, and opposed to the divine intention. He says that the flow of blood and water from the side shows that it was a natural event, whereas S. John himself says that it was supernatural (verse 35). Because it appeared to be incredible he affirms that it did happen, and that he saw it and related the truth.

That Christ's legs were not broken is taken by S. John to be a mystery that the Scripture might be fulfilled (*Exod.* xii. 46; *Zach.* xii. 10). The latter prophecy was not fulfilled at that time wholly, but it began to be so. They pierced Christ, then, which was one part of the prophecy, but it will not be until the Day of Judgment that they shall look on Him; as S. John explains (*Apoc.* i. 7).

Verse 57. *And when it was evening* ("sero").

"Sero" here does not mean that it was actually evening, but that it was inclining towards evening. If it had been actually evening it would not have been lawful to take Christ down from the cross and bury Him; because the rest and observation of the Sabbath began with evening. For this reason they hastened His burial; for, if the Sabbath had begun, it would not have been lawful to perform it, as is said by S. Mark (xv. 42) and S. Luke (xxiii. 54).

*There came a rich man of Arimathea.*

S. Luke (xxiii. 51) says that Arimathea was a city of Judæa. Eusebius says that it was formerly called Ruma and Remptis. It was in the tribe of Judah (*Judges* ix. 41; 4 *Kings* xxiii. 36).

*Who also himself was a disciple of Jesus.*

He gave his reason secretly for desiring to take charge of the burial of Christ. S. John describes him as “a disciple of Jesus, but secretly for fear of the Jews” (xix. 38). S. Mark (xv. 43) calls him “a noble counsellor,” *εὐσχημῶν βουλευτῆς*: “Who was also himself looking for the kingdom of God”. S. Luke speaks to the same effect (xxiii. 51), adding that he had not consented to the counsel and doings of the Jews, so that it would appear that he was not only a counsellor, but that he had also been present at the council in which they deliberated about seizing Christ, and putting Him to death, and had not agreed with them.

Verse 58. *He went to Pilate.*

Before the Sabbath had begun (S. *Mark* xv. 43; S. *Luke* xxiii. 52). It was not lawful to take down and bury the bodies of criminals without the permission of a judge (lib. i. ff., *De Cadav. Puniend.*). Joseph, therefore, asked the body of Christ from the governor.

*Then Pilate commanded that the body should be delivered.*

S. Mark (xv. 44) says that Pilate wondered that Christ was dead so soon, and that he sent for the centurion to enquire whether it were really so; and when he knew the truth he gave the body to Joseph. It is possible that Pilate may have suspected deceit, and thought that Joseph, a disciple of Christ, though a secret one, had asked for His body while He was yet alive, that under the pretence of burying Him he might deliver Him from the cross and death. All this was done by the divine counsel, that the

judge himself who had condemned Christ might know from the testimony of the centurion and the others who guarded Him on the cross that He was truly dead, and might bear witness to His death: that none might say hereafter that He had not truly risen (not having truly died), but had been taken down from the cross alive, and shut up in a tomb.

It may, perhaps, be matter of wonder that neither the Apostles, nor the others who openly professed themselves Christ's disciples, should have performed this office for Him, but that it should have been left to Joseph who was a secret believer, and to Nicodemus, who, as S. John says (iii. 2; vii. 50), was another. S. Ambrose (*On S. Luke* x.) says: "Why did not the Apostles, but Joseph and Nicodemus, the one a just man and constant, and the other in whom was no guile, bury Christ? That burial was one in which there could be no fraud or deception; all room for tergiversation is done away, and the Jews are rejected by their own testimony. For if the Apostles had buried Christ themselves, it might have been said that He had not been actually buried, whom the Jews feign to have been carried off."

Verse 59. *Wrapped it in a clean linen cloth.*

It was, without doubt, to honour Christ that Joseph wrapped His body, not in any kind of ordinary linen, but in such as was fine and new, and which S. Mark says he bought for the purpose (xv. 46). Although the Ancients saw a divine mystery in the fact, it was becoming that the body of Christ, which was most pure, should be wrapped in linen both clean and new.

Verse 60. *And laid it in his own new monument, which he had hewed out in a rock.*

This also was done to honour Christ; and for this reason this entombment is so carefully described by the

Evangelists. Joseph laid Christ not in any ordinary tomb, but in his own, which, as S. Matthew says, "he had hewn out in the rock". This was done, not by his forefathers, but by himself; and the tomb was not built of stone, but was hewn out. Only the great and illustrious are buried in this style. S. Luke adds: "Wherein never yet had any man been laid" (xxiii. 53). S. John adds what the rest omit: "That the body was inclosed with spices, as the manner is of the Jews to bury" (xix. 39, 40).

We see that Joseph and Nicodemus omitted no kind of honour to the tomb of Christ. But His body was then dead, and what could they do for the living? The Ancients saw a mystery in this also. They say that the tomb of Christ should resemble His mother's womb, in which there never was any other. Christ must be both purely conceived and purely buried.

This also all tends to prove the truth of the Resurrection: as Bede, Theophylact, and Euthymius observe. For if the tomb had not been a new one, the Jews might have said that it was not Christ who rose from the dead, but some other person who was buried in the same place. If the tomb had been built of stones, they would have said that the disciples had dug under them and carried off the body, nothing of which could be said of a tomb hewn out of a rock. This has been pointed out by S. Jerome and Bede. This also applies to the rolling of the stone described by S. Matthew (verse 60): "He rolled a great stone to the door of the monument, and went his way".

It could not be said that Christ not being really dead, the stone was removed and He escaped; nor that the disciples had opened it, and stolen the body. Bede, on this passage, describes the tomb from the account of those who (*religionis causa*) had visited Jerusalem in his time, as being round, hewn out of the rock, of such a height that a man, standing up inside and raising his arms, could scarcely

touch the top. It had an entrance from the east, at which the great stone was rolled and placed against it. In the north part is the tomb itself; that is, the place of the Lord's body, made of the same rock. It is seven feet in length, and it is higher than the rest of the floor by three palms' breadth. It is open, not from below, but on the whole south side, whence the body was brought in. The colour of the tomb and sepulchre is red, or red mixed with white.

Verse 61. *And there were there Mary Magdalene and the other Mary.*

On Mary Magdalene see verse 56. The other Mary is the mother of James and Joses, of whom we have also spoken on verse 56. It is plain from S. Mark (xv. 47) that this is she who is to be understood here by the name of "the other Mary". S. Matthew, when he speaks of the other Maries, always puts Mary Magdalene first, and by "the other Mary" he understands the mother of James and Joses, as in chap. xxviii. 1. They were present to see where the body of Christ was laid, that they might return after the Sabbath and anoint it (S. Mark xv. 47; xvi. 1; S. Luke xxiii. 55).

Verse 62. *And the next day which followed the day of preparation.*

That is, the Sabbath, on which day the Jews, that year, kept the Passover, as explained chap. xxvi. 2.

*The chief priests and Pharisees came together to Pilate.*

These placed their whole religion in an even superstitious observance of the Sabbath; yet they were so blinded by their hatred of Christ that they violated it; for it was not lawful for them by their law and tradition, on the Sabbath, and that the day of the Pasch, to approach a judge: to ask for soldiers: to bring armed men to the sepulchre: or to seal the tomb.



Verse 63. *We have remembered.*

They would rather blame their own negligence and forgetfulness than seem careless in guarding a man now dead. They speak as if they had previously forgotten the point—"We have remembered"—and that Pilate might not wonder at their not having asked for a guard of soldiers at first, and their asking it now that Christ was buried.

*That that seducer said while He was yet alive, After three days I will rise again.*

Christ had not said that He would rise again after three days, but on the third day (xvi. 21 ; xx. 19). The opinion of those who explain "after" by "within" three days, or on the third day, as the Latins say, seems correct. For if the priests and Pharisees had understood Christ to say that He would not rise till after three days had been completed, they would have had no reason to fear that the disciples would steal Him away in the interval. It is indeed most improbable that they would have attempted such a thing before the day He Himself had named. Again, they would have taken care to watch the tomb not only during those days, but for many days after, as He did not signify that He would rise immediately after the third day, but that He would not do so before it, as in *S. Mark* viii. 31 : "He began to teach them that the Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the ancients and by the high priests and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again".

Verse 64. *Command therefore the sepulchre to be guarded until the third day.*

As when they asserted before that Christ had said, "After three days I will rise again," the word "after" did not mean that the three days must be passed before He

would rise from the dead ; so here when they say, "until the third day," the word "until" does not mean, as it usually does, the beginning but the end of the third day ; as if they had said, Command the tomb to be guarded, until the third day has passed.

*And steal Him.*

The Greek adds *νύκτος*, *noctu*, "by night," *ἔλθοντες κλέψωσι*. The passage may be read, "Lest they come by night and steal Him away," or "lest they come and steal Him away by night". The meaning will be the same.

*And they say to the people, He is risen from the dead.*

As if their meaning were, "They would not say this to us, who are men of learning and refinement, and should by no means believe them, but they might make such an assertion to the ignorant multitude, which yields easy faith to every rumour". The Jews used to say, what the heretics do now, that Christ had no disciples but the rude and ignorant. So *S. John* vii. 47, 48, 49.

*And the last error should be worse than the first.*

By the "first error" they meant that Christ, while alive, persuaded the people by miracles, performed by diabolical agency, that He was the Son of God ; "the last" would be, if the disciples persuaded the people, that He had risen from the dead. This would be worse than the first, because the first was contained in it. For if He had risen, which is of all things the most difficult, they would believe the more readily that all He had taught during His life was true.

Verse 65. *You have a guard.*

Some think that they had a military force for the protection of the Temple. That there were armed men kept for this purpose is certain, because, among other officers,

mention is made of a *στράτηγος* or *dux*. These suppose Pilate to have answered, "You have a guard," as meaning that it was needless to ask for what they had already. If they had soldiers they would have been confined to the protection of the Temple, and could not have been employed in any other manner. If Pilate spoke of a Jewish soldiery, these could only have been of the priestly tribe, because to them alone was confided the protection of the Temple, and what need to offer these money, to feign what they did about the stealing away of the body? They would have been certain to say this of their own accord. Some take the words, "You have," *ἔχετε*, for the imperative, and that Pilate meant to command them: "Go and take". This is an error. The word here is an indicative, and means that Pilate did not command or direct them to take a guard, but merely granted one: "Whatever military force I have is in your power; go, keep the tomb". This is rightly expressed by Juvenius in the following lines:

"Et Pilatus ad hæc, miles permittitur, inquit,  
Servate ut vultis, corpus tellure sepultum".

Said Pilate, "Soldiers shall for this be found,  
Keep you the body, buried in the ground".

Verse 66. *And they, departing, made the sepulchre sure.*

The Greek is *ἀσφαλίζω*, "to make safe". The same word is used, in verses 64, 65, by the Pharisees to Pilate, and by Pilate to the Pharisees, when he said, "Go, guard it as you know". The words that follow are to be united thus—although separated by *hyperbaton*, or transposition—as if it were written, "They made the tomb sure with a guard, having first sealed the stone". They sealed the stone with a ring, or something of the sort, that the disciples might not come while the soldiers slept and open the tomb—in which case the theft would have been discovered by the seal having been broken—nor the soldiers

themselves be bribed by the disciples to give up the body. So Darius sealed, with his own ring, the den of lions into which Daniel was thrown (*Dan.* vi. 17), that no one might say that he had delivered the Prophet by stealth, or that others had entered the den and slain him, and given out that he had been killed by the lions.

The diligence of the priests in darkening the divinity and glory of Christ was wonderful ; but the Divine Providence, which made use of their labours and artifices to publish it, was more wonderful. The priests feared lest the disciples should persuade the people that Christ had risen, as He had foretold. They employed keepers to this end : but these very persons bore witness, not to the people, but to the priests themselves, and to the Pharisees, by whom they were employed, that Christ had risen (xxviii. 11). They sealed the stone of the sepulchre that no one might steal the body ; but the stone itself, carefully guarded as it was, certified that the body of Christ was not removed from the tomb by force or fraud, but was raised by divine power. Nothing is closed, nothing is sealed to God ; but “ He catcheth the wise in their craftiness, and disappointeth the counsel of the wicked ” (*Job* v. 13), and “ The wisdom of this world is foolishness with God ”. For it is written, “ I will catch the wise in their own craftiness ” (1 *Cor.* iii. 19). S. Hilary says well : “ Their fear that the body would be stolen, and their guarding and sealing the stone, are a proof of their folly and unbelief. For they desired to seal the tomb of Him, whom, according to His own saying, they beheld, when dead, risen from the sepulchre.”

## CHAPTER XXVIII.

### THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST—HIS COMMISSION TO HIS DISCIPLES.

Verse 1. *And in the end of the Sabbath.*

THIS passage has been thought one of very great difficulty, because the wording is obscure in itself and the other Evangelists do not appear to agree with S. Matthew; nor S. Matthew with himself; nor the others among themselves; nor S. Mark with himself. S. Matthew, it seems, says that the women came to the tomb "at the end of the Sabbath, when it began to dawn, towards the first day of the week". S. Mark (xvi. 2): "Very early in the morning, the first day of the week". S. Luke (xxiv. 1): "On the first day of the week, very early in the morning". S. John (xx. 1): "On the first day of the week, when it was yet dark". So that the three Evangelists seem to contradict S. Matthew, and S. Matthew to contradict himself. For when he had said that the women came at the end of the Sabbath, he says in the same place, "When it began to dawn towards the first day of the week," showing that it was morning.

The other Evangelists seem to differ among themselves, because they say:

S. Mark: "When the sun had risen".

S. Luke: "Very early in the morning," and, a little further on (verse 22), "before it was light".

S. John: "When it was yet dark".

S. Mark seems to contradict himself by saying, "Very

early in the morning," and then adding, "when the sun was risen".

They did not come very early if they came after the sun had risen.

The seeming difference between S. Matthew and the others has been thus explained :

That the same women, in their anxiety, came twice, or more (S. Jerome, *Comment.*; Dionysius of Alexandria to Basilides).

Others say that they came four times.

1. In the evening, as S. Matthew says.
2. In the morning, when it was dark, as S. John says.
3. Very early in the morning, as S. Luke says.
4. When the sun had risen, as S. Mark says.

They therefore give four different times (S. Athanasius, *Quæst.* 90). But S. Matthew, S. Mark, and S. Luke appear to speak as if their visit were in the beginning of the morning, as will be shown (verse 3).

Others think that the women who, as S. Matthew says, came in the evening of the Sabbath were different to those who came on the dawn of the first day of the week; and as it must be objected that one of those who came in the evening and one who came in the morning was each called Magdalene by S. Matthew, as well as by the other three Evangelists, these make two Magdalenes—one who came in the evening and one who came in the morning. So S. Ambrose (*Comm. on S. Luke* xxiv.), Eusebius, and others in Anastatius.

But that there was only one Magdalene is the constant statement of all, and is clear from every place in which any mention of the name is made (S. *Matt.* xxvii. 56; S. *Mark* xv. 40; xvi. 1; S. *Luke* viii. 2, 3; xxiv. 10; S. *John* xx. 1); for they all call her Mary Magdalene, to distinguish her from the other Maries. And, if there had been a second Magdalene, she would have had some other

distinctive title, and would have been called, for example, the sister of Martha or Lazarus. The reason of S. Ambrose forming this opinion will be answered on verse 9.

Others think that they were the same women, and came to the tomb only once; that is, on the night which followed the Sabbath.

For whether they came twice, *orto jam die*, or once only is another question which will be discussed (verse 3).

These think that they began to come in the evening, and arrived early in the morning; not that they passed the whole night in so short a journey, but that they seem to have begun to come in the evening, because they then got ready the spices for the following morning (*S. Mark* xvi. 1; *S. Luke* xxiii. 56). So say Bede, Strabus Rabanus (*Ap. Thom.*), Rupertus (*In Comm. on S. John*), and De Lyra (*in loc.*).

Some think, as Dionysius of Alexandria to Basilides, S. Greg. Nyss. (*Orat.* ii. *de Resurr.*), S. Cyril Alexandria (xii., *On S. John*), S. Augustin (*De Cons.*, iii. 24), Eutychius, Theophylact, S. Thomas, and, perhaps, S. Ambrose (*On S. Luke* x.), that S. Matthew calls the whole night the evening.

This opinion appears the most, indeed the only, correct one, and it cannot be doubted that it was the intention of S. Matthew to say the same as the others, and most especially of S. Mark, who was S. Matthew's interpreter in a manner.

The other Evangelists make no mention of any visit in the evening, but state that the women came early in the morning. S. Matthew meant the same. When he speaks, therefore, of the end of the Sabbath, he does not mean the evening, the time between the day and night, but the whole night; at the end of which, that is, at the dawn of the day, the women came to the tomb. This would appear less strange if the Hebrew expression (which even S.

Thomas has observed) were understood. The Hebrews call not only the evening but the whole night ערב "evening," as the first chapter of Genesis abundantly proves.

Some oppose this, and say that S. Matthew said that it was not only the evening, but the evening of the Sabbath. But the evening of the Sabbath must be part of the Sabbath, like the morning. But the night which followed the Sabbath was not part of it, and therefore could not be called the evening of the Sabbath. It seems strange that men of learning and judgment should have been so completely mistaken as to the true meaning of S. Matthew, and from so slight a cause. They ought first to have observed that S. Matthew did not say, ἐσπέρα δὲ σαββάτων, *vespera autem Sabbati*, sed ὁψὲ δὲ σαββάτων, "ad verbum": *sero Sabbatorum, aut tarde Sabbatorum*, if we may so speak in Latin. S. Gregory of Nyssa, both by birth and language a Greek, and S. Ambrose, apparently following him, have observed that the words properly mean when the Sabbath was long passed, after a considerable interval, for the Greeks spoke thus: ὁψὲ τοῦ καιροῦ παραγέγονας, *serius, quam pro opportuno tempore, venisti, et: ὁψὲ τῆς ὥρας, transacta longe hora, et: ὁψὲ τῆς χρείας, longe serius, quam opus erat.* In the same sense, therefore, S. Matthew said, ὁψὲ σαββάτων, *sero Sabbati*; that is, the Sabbath having passed some considerable time, because, between the Sabbath and the morning the whole night, as he desired to point out, had intervened. But if S. Matthew had called it the evening of the Sabbath, it would not follow that it was part of the Sabbath. For Scripture frequently calls that the evening of the day of which it is no part, but follows it. 1 *Kings* xx. 5 calls the following night the evening of the third day; for as the king supped at evening, David signified that he should not sup with him; and *Exod.* xii. 6, 18, where it is clear that the following night is called the evening



of the fourteenth day, which was a part, not of the fourteenth, but of the fifteenth day. For the lamb was sacrificed, not on the fourteenth, but the fifteenth day. That is, after the day of Pasch, and the feast of Azymes had begun. A similar example is found in *Levit.* xxiii. 5 ; *Numb.* ix. 3, 5, 11.

Hence it appears that there is no difference between S. Matthew and the other Evangelists ; and in the same way it is proved that S. Matthew does not differ from himself. For he does not mean both the evening and the morning, but only the morning.

But the reader may ask how, if it were night, it could have begun to dawn? Some think it a Hebrew idiom, because candles were lighted in the houses at the beginning of the night, as is taught by the traditions of the Talmudists. S. Jerome is not averse to this opinion. Others think it a Hebrew expression, by which the night is said to dawn when it begins, the expression being derived from the day, for it begins to be day when it begins to dawn. This is so, and it is proved by S. Luke (xxiii. 54), "And it was the day of the Parasceue, and the Sabbath drew on" (*illucescebat*), that is, it had begun, or was at hand. For the Evangelist speaks of the time when Christ was buried, that is, the day of Parasceue, before the Sabbath, the day then declining. And he says that the Sabbath had then begun to dawn ; that is, it had commenced, or was at hand. But against this and the former explanation is not merely the unusual expression, but the truth of the history. For it has been shown that S. Matthew, like all the other Evangelists, meant not the evening but the morning. The lighting of the candles, therefore, of the Talmudists and the Hebraism has nothing to do with the passage ; for S. Matthew or his interpreter used the Greek correctly. He wished to say that the day had begun to dawn.

Some think the meaning to be that the evening—that is, the night—had begun to dawn (*illucescere*) to the first day of the week, because it was inclining towards the following day. As if, on the other hand, we should say that the day had begun (*noctescere*) to dawn towards night ; not that it could really do so, but that the night was coming on, and the day was in a manner changed into night, as Juvenecus says :

“ Sidera jam noctis, venturo cedere soli  
Incipiunt, tumuli matres tunc visere septum  
Concurrunt ”.

Now to the coming sun the stars of night  
Begin to render up their fading light ;  
And onwards to the stone-defended tomb  
Together now the holy women come.

S. Augustin, Euthymius, and Theophylact are of this opinion. I do not differ from them in the opinion itself, but only in their explanation of it. They seem to think that it was the night which is here said *lucescere*, but S. Matthew, in my opinion, means that it was not the night but the day. He does not use the word either “night” or “day,” but says “Ὁψε σαββάτων, τῇ ἐπιφωσκούσῃ εἰς μίαν σαββάτων,” “in the end of the Sabbath,” the morning which dawned to the first day of the week. When the article must express either day or night, the Greek requires us to understand the day rather than the night, as in chap. vi. 34 ; S. *John* i. 35 ; xii. 12 ; *Acts* iv. 3-5 ; xx. 7 ; and S. *James* iv. 14 ; nor do I remember the article ever to be used absolutely when the night is intended. In this way the meaning is better and less cramped. For that the day should begin to grow light is both in fact and expression natural. That the night can do so is unusual, and only to be taken in figure. It may be objected to this view, though it has not been so, that it seems tautology, or at least an expression not well

balanced, to say that the day began to dawn to the first day of the week, when by the first day of the week the day that is said to dawn (*lucescere*) is meant. It may seem so if the word "day" is expressed. But when it is not, it is no more out of place than if we said *de die Dominicæ loquentes*, "the day began to dawn in Dominicam". For by the expression "Dominicam" we understand *diem*, but because *dies* is not expressed, and the meaning is that the *dies Dominica* begins to dawn (*illucescere*), there is no tautology.

*On the first day of the week ("in prima Sabbati").*

Εἰς μίαν σαββάτων, *in unam Sabbatorum*, a more lucid expression. The motion and progress of the night towards the day is shown by the use of the preposition *in*, with the accusative. So, probably, it was rendered at first; but the final "m" may have dropped out from the fault of the transcriber. The Hebrews called the whole week, as well as the seventh day, *Sabbatum*; and when they meant the whole week, they called the first day of it *prima Sabbati*, the second *secunda*, and so on. It has been observed that when the seventh day alone is intended, *Sabbatum*, *σάββατον*, is used in the singular number; when the whole week is intended, the plural *σάββατα*, *Sabbata*, is found, as in this place and in *S. Mark* xvi. 2; *S. Luke* xxiv. 1; *S. John* xx. 1-19; *Acts* xx. 7. But this is not universal; for in *S. Mark* xvi. 9, we find *prima Sabbati*, *σαββάτων*, when the whole week is meant; and, on the other hand, in *Acts* xiii. 14, on the day, *τῶν σαββάτων*, when only the Sabbath day was meant. Again, *unam Sabbati* is used for *prima*. Our version renders the Hebrew by Latin words, when it often keeps the expression, as in *S. Mark* xvi. 2; *S. Luke* xxiv. 1—*una Sabbatorum, una Sabbati*. The first day of the week, as all know, is our "Lord's day," which, as the world was first created, and then redeemed by the Resurrection of

Christ on it, is kept in the place of the Jewish Sabbath ; as Gaudentius (*On Exod.* i.) and Sedulius (*Carm.*, lib. v.) say :

“Cœperat interea, post tristia Sabbata, felix  
Irradiare dies, culmen qui nominis alti  
A domino dominante trahit, primusque videri  
Promeruit nasci mundum, atque resurgere Christum”.

Now, that sad Sabbath past, begins to dawn  
The day, the great and happy day ; whose crown  
Of a most lofty name, from Him derived  
The Lord and Ruler, but now first deserved.  
That day on which was born the world, and now  
The Christ doth rise, victorious o'er the tomb.

We have now to see how the other three Evangelists agree among themselves as to the time at which the women came to the sepulchre. The greatest divarication seems to exist between S. Mark and S. John. S. Mark says that the sun had risen (xvi. 2) ; S. John : “When it was yet dark”. S. Luke says the same in other words : “Before it was light”.

Some would correct the text of S. Mark, by the insertion of a negative, and read, “The sun having not yet risen”. They have no other authority than the fact that in some Greek copies the reading is *ἔτι*, and that Eusebius so receives it, and the opinion that the one word *οὐκ* may have easily dropped out. No one of the Ancients, except Eusebius, so reads it, and our version has it as it is ; S. Dionysius of Alexandria (*Ep. ad Basilides*), S. Augustin (*De Cons.*, iii. 24), Rupertus (*On S. John* xx.), De Lyra (*On S. Mark* xvi.), do the same. It would, indeed, be a very excellent thing if the negative were read ; but, as we have said, Scripture, which of all things ought to be to us the most holy, is not to be altered on such insufficient grounds. It may be better to think with others that the common explanation may be true, that the women, “very early in the morning,” as S. Mark says, left their houses “when it was yet dark,” as S. John says, and arrived at the

tomb "when the sun had risen," as S. Mark says (xvi. 2). For, although the distance from the city was not great, yet it was so great that, if they set out while it was dark, they would hardly arrive till the sun had risen ; as Dionysius, in the letter which we have cited more than once, explains ; or they may have come when the sun was risen (*orto*), that is, *oriente, sole*. The sun is said to be risen, not only when the solar body appears above the earth, but also when his rays have dispelled the darkness of the night, as S. Augustin, Euthymius, Bede, Theophylact, and De Lyra say. This view will be more probable if we read the latter *oriente*, as S. Augustin and Theophylact do, whether they take the Greek aorist ἀνατείλαντος as meaning the present ἀνατέλλοντος, or read not ἀνατείλαντος but ἀνατέλλοντος. This appears more easy of belief than the supposition that the entire word οὐκ, "not," has fallen out of the text. And the meaning would not be greatly changed ; for it is easier to suppose that the Greek copyist had inserted -τειλ- for -τελλ- than that he had omitted a word, especially in a passage in which the omission would strike everyone at once as senseless, and out of harmony with the context. Read thus there is no divarication between the Evangelists ; for *sole jam oriente* and *sole nondum orto* are much the same thing.

It seems hardly probable, too, that the women would have had the courage to come to the tomb before daylight. If so, and even if S. Mark had not said, *orto jam sole* (xvi. 2), both S. John's *adhuc tenebræ sunt* and S. Luke's *ante lucem* are to be understood as marking the time, not of the women's coming to the tomb, but of their setting out from their homes ; and thus we see how S. Mark does not contradict himself when he says, *valde mane*, "very early" : meaning when they set out from home ; and *orto jam sole*, "the sun being now risen," when they came to the tomb.

*Came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary.*

On Mary Magdalene, *vide* chap. xxvii. 56. By the other Mary is meant the wife of Cleophas and the mother of James the Less and Joses, as chap. xxvii. 61, and as is clear from *S. Mark* xvi. 1. S. Mark also mentions Salome, mother of the sons of Zebedee. S. Luke (xxiv. 10) speaks of many other women, as also in chaps. viii. 3 and xxiii. 55. Some think that the Blessed Virgin, the Mother of Christ, was among them, as S. Greg. Nyss. (*Orat. ii. de Resurr.*) and Sedulius :

“ Hoc luminis ortu  
Virgo parens, aliæque simul cum munere matres,  
Mensis aromaticæ noctu venere gementes  
Ad tumulum ”.

Now when the sun begins to appear,  
The Virgin Mother draweth near,  
And with her sad companions come,  
To bring sweet spices to the tomb.

It cannot be doubted that the Blessed Virgin yielded to none in love and zeal towards Christ ; but that she came with the other women seems hardly probable, for none of the Evangelists mention her, and they would not have passed her over if she had been present with the others. We see that all the Evangelists name Mary Magdalene in the first place, as the most noble of all the women who came to the tomb, and as she was in a sense their leader. But they would have placed the Blessed Virgin, if she had come with them, before Magdalene. S. John says that Mary the Mother of Christ, and Mary Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene were at the cross. He puts Mary the Mother of Christ before all the rest, and the other Evangelists would have done the same here if she had come with them to the tomb. The opinion of S. Gregory of Nyssa seems wholly untenable—that by the other Mary S. John meant

the Mother of Christ. S. Mark tells us plainly who she was. S. John (xx. 1) says that Mary Magdalene came alone—probably because she was the head of the band and she alone held the conversation with the angels, which S. John desired to commemorate. The other Evangelists speak not all of the same number, but all mention more than one, because they desired to show that the three women (S. *Mark* xvi. 1) were the first witnesses of the Resurrection, and there must be two witnesses at least to prove a thing, as *Deut.* xvii. 6; S. *Matt.* xviii. 16. Besides, S. Matthew speaks of two, S. Mark of three, S. Luke of more.

*To see the sepulchre.*

S. Mark (xvi. 1) and S. Luke (xxiv. 1) say that they came to anoint Christ. S. John does not state the cause of their coming. This has caused some to think that the women came twice—the first time not to anoint Christ, but, as S. Matthew says, to see the tomb; and then to anoint. Among these are S. Dionysius of Alexandria and S. Jerome (*in loc.*, and *Quest.* 6 to *Hedibias*). But this has been answered above, and will be answered again by and by at more length.

But why did S. Matthew say that they came to see the tomb? Not to show that they came only to see it and not to anoint the body of Christ, but to show that they came to anoint, but doubted whether they could succeed, because they knew that the tomb was sealed with a great stone. And thus they talked anxiously among themselves as they came along: "Who shall roll us away the stone from the door of the sepulchre?" (S. *Mark* xvi. 3). S. Matthew meant that they came to see the sepulchre whether it were so closed and kept as to allow of their entering, and, when they had entered, of anointing the body of Christ.

Verse 2. *And behold there was a great earthquake.*

The word *ecce*, "behold," shows that the earthquake took place as the women were going to, or approaching, the tomb. On the force of *ecce*, *vide* chap. ii. 1. The Evangelist clearly shows the cause of the earthquake—viz., the descent of the angel from heaven, for he uses the causal particle "for". Why the earthquake took place on that descent the Evangelist does not say. The probable reason may have been that given by S. Chrysostom (*Hom. xc. on S. Matt.*). Euthymius and Theophylact (*in loc.*) say that the keepers of the tomb, who were sleeping, might be aroused by the commotion, and so be compelled to become witnesses of Christ's Resurrection. The reason may have been to show the women and keepers of the tomb that they who appeared by the tomb in shining apparel were not men, but angels; that is, heavenly and divine messengers. It has been shown (xxxvii. 51) from many passages of Scripture that such convulsions signify the presence of God, or of some representative of God. That the keepers and women, therefore, might believe the angels, it was necessary that they should recognise them, not only by their shining garments, but by the shaking of the ground. There might have been another reason: that the keepers might understand that Christ was not taken away by theft nor by any human means, but that He had risen by the divine power by which the earthquake itself was caused.

*For an angel of the Lord descended from heaven.*

One reason of this descent has been mentioned: the rolling away of the stone. There may be others. S. Chrysostom mentions three, besides the rolling away of the stone.

1. That the angels might show that God was buried there, since they stood at the tomb, as they do in heaven where He dwells.



2. To teach the women that Christ had truly risen from the dead, and to warn them to tell the Apostles as soon as possible. For if they had not been taught by the angels, they would not have believed ; for it appears from S. John that even after they had been taught by them, they did not wholly believe, but rather thought that He had been taken away by theft.

3. To anticipate all frauds and machinations ; and that the Jews, when they heard that Christ had risen, might not put another in the tomb in His place that He might appear not to have risen.

Heretics dispute with the Church as to why the angel moved the stone. Some think that it was done that Christ might rise and go out from the tomb ; of which opinion S. Hilary (*Can. xxxiii. on S. Matt.*) seems somewhat a favourer. S. Leo (*Ep. lxxxiii.*) to the monks of Palestine : "Let these Christian teachers of a phantasm say what substance of the Saviour was fixed to the Cross ; what lay in the tomb, and, when the stone was rolled away, what flesh rose on the third day". But it is clear from the words of the Evangelists, that Christ rose before the angel rolled away the stone. For S. Matthew clearly says that the earthquake was on account of the descent of the angel. But if Christ had not yet risen, he would have said that the earthquake was not because of the descent of the angel, but because of the Resurrection of Christ. Besides, S. Mark says that the stone was rolled away by the angel, not that Christ might rise, but that the women might enter and see that the tomb was empty (xvi. 3, 4) : quite as if he had said, "The angels came in good time and rolled away the stone for the women, who were anxious on the subject before they came to the sepulchre".

Lastly, as S. Jerome (*Quæst. 6 to Hedibias*), S. Greg. Nyss. (*Orat. ii. de Resurr.*), Euthymius (*in loc.*) say,

“No one ever knew at what hour Christ rose”. But that at which the stone was rolled away is found from all the Evangelists. For as the earthquake, as S. Matthew says, was on account of the descent of the angel, and it took place as the women were approaching the sepulchre, as the word “Behold” shows, and the angel, as S. Matthew says, rolled away the stone: it follows that it was rolled away as the women approached. All the Evangelists state that they set out from their homes early, when it was yet dark, as S. John says; and they arrived when the sun was rising or risen, as S. Mark says. The stone, therefore, was rolled away then. It was not rolled away, therefore, as the above-named modern heretics say, that Christ might come out. For all the ancient authors have taught, what the Evangelists clearly teach, that the stone was rolled away, not for the sake of Christ, but for the women: as S. Jerome writes to Hedibias, and others to be cited shortly; and the angels were not sent to aid Christ, as if He could not have come out of the tomb without their assistance; but they sat as witnesses and heralds of His Resurrection. In the same manner they did not come to Christ during His Temptation, when He was tempted by the devil, lest they should have been thought to have come to help Him; but they came after He was tempted, and after His victory, that they might celebrate His triumph and acknowledge Him as conqueror. All ancient authors teach that, in the same manner as that in which Christ passed out of His Mother’s womb, He came out of the tomb, and went in to the disciples; that is, as by His own body He neither opened nor burst that of His mother, so neither did He the stone of the tomb nor the doors of the house where the disciples were, nor, what is similar, soften, but penetrate them. So say S. Justin Martyr (*Quæst.* 117 *ad Orthod.*), S. Chrysostom (*Hom.* ii. *J. Bapt.*), S. Gregory Nazianzen (*Tragœd. de Christ. patient.*), S. Jerome (*Quæst.* 6 *ad*

*Hedib.*), S. Augustin (*Serms.* cxxxviii, clix., *de Temp.*), Euthymius (*in loc.*).

*And sat upon it.*

The angel sat upon the stone as if expecting the coming of the women ; and as if to show that it was he who had rolled away the stone, for he sat upon his own work. But how he is said here to sit, when S. Luke (xxiv. 4) describes the angels as standing, and what the stone was upon which they sat, shall be described in the following verse.

Verse 3. *And his countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow.*

All the Evangelists describe the peculiar clothing of the angel carefully, but S. Matthew the most so of all (*S. Mark* xvi. 5 ; *S. Luke* xxiv. 4 ; *S. John* xx. 12). Such care is not devoid of mystery, and it is some proof of it. We often read of angels visiting men in the usual habit of men, so as to be thought to be men (*Gen.* xvi. 7 ; xviii. 1, 2 ; xix. 1 ; xxxii. 24 ; *Joshua* v. 13 ; *Judges* ii. 1, 4 ; *Dan.* viii. 16 ; *Zach.* ii. 1 ; *Tobit* v. 5, 6 ; xii. 15). But here the angels appear in a new clothing ; in a new manner and with a new splendour. It is easy to suppose that they were sent to assure us, by heavenly and divine authority, of the Resurrection of the Lord. And it was therefore needful that they should come with such an appearance as to render it certain that they were angels. When it was not necessary that they should be known as such, or it was better that they should not be, they appeared in the usual guise of men, as to Abraham (*Gen.* xviii. 2), to Lot (xix. 1), and to the son of Tobias (v. 7). But when it is necessary that they should be recognised as angels, they bear a more exalted appearance than that of men, as *Acts* i. 10. This is the reason given by S. Cyril (chap. xlvi. *on S. John* xii.). But S. Gregory (*Hom.* xx. *in Evangel.*) and Bede (*in*

*loc.*) give another, why the angels here appeared in shining apparel—to show the glory of the rising of Christ and our joy thereat. To the same effect is S. Mark's calling the angel a young man, for the angels never appear in any but a youthful form, that, as S. Dionysius (*Celest Hier.*, xv.) says, their *vis vitalis* may never appear as aged, but always youthful and flourishing, and that their immortality might be seen. S. Matthew and S. John call them angels. S. Mark and S. Luke men; the former as what they were, the latter as what they appeared at first sight.

There are many other difficult questions in this place, besides the apparent divarication on the above point between the Evangelists.

1. How S. Matthew and S. Mark speak of one angel; S. Luke and S. John of two.

2. How S. Matthew says that the angel sat upon the stone which he had rolled away, which was outside the tomb, so that the angel must necessarily have been outside also, while S. Mark (xvi. 5) and S. John (xx. 12) say that he was inside; the former speaking of a young man, and the latter of two angels.

3. How S. Matthew and S. Mark speak of the angel as sitting; while S. Luke says that the angels were standing, and were seen to be so by the women.

4. How S. Matthew, S. Mark, and S. Luke speak of more women than one as having seen the angels; S. John only of Mary Magdalene.

5. How S. John says that Mary Magdalene, when she came first to the tomb, found the stone rolled away, but did not see the angel until she had returned and told the disciples of the Resurrection; when S. Matthew, S. Mark, and S. Luke say that the women not only saw the angel when they came first, but that he told them to go and announce the Resurrection to the disciples.

To the first question. They who follow the opinion of S.

Augustin (*De Cons.*, iii. 24), and think that the women came twice, not in the evening and morning, as S. Jerome says, but when the sun had risen, easily (though whether truly or not may be a question) answer that when they came the first time they saw one angel, and when they came the second time they saw two.

Others think that at first, before they went into the tomb, they saw one angel, and then when they had entered they either saw one and then another, as S. Mark indicates, or two, as S. Luke and S. John say. So it is explained by Theophylact (*in loco*) and S. Thomas. It may be suggested, however, that there are three difficulties here :

1. That the women came to the tomb twice.
2. That when they came first they saw either no angel at all, or only one.
3. That they saw one angel outside the tomb, the other inside ; or one outside and two inside.

To these three points, because the explanation of all the other proposed questions depends upon them in great part, it may be worth while to reply.

The first and second, because they are so closely united that they cannot be separated, stand together and may be refuted by the same arguments.

1. When S. Matthew, S. Mark, and S. Luke say that the women came to the tomb, it is not a question that they speak of their first visit. They add that they came *summo mane*, to show that they came when it was first possible ; both because of the Sabbath and the night that followed it. As if they had passed the whole night without sleep, and waited for the morning that they might hasten to the tomb. But the Evangelists say that when they came in the morning, they then saw the angels, and it cannot be doubted that the women, at the commandment of the angel, then told Peter and John of the Resurrection, and that they thereupon ran to the tomb to judge for them-

selves. For S. Mark says in plain words (xvi. 7) that the angel said to the women, "But go, tell His disciples and Peter that He goeth before you into Galilee ; there you shall see Him as He told you".

They therefore saw the angel before they told Peter and John, and before Peter and John came to the tomb. For what need would there have been to command them to tell Peter that Christ had risen if he had already come and seen the empty tomb with his own eyes ?

They who think that the women came to the tomb twice, and when they came the first time saw no angel, say, or must say, that Peter and John came to the tomb before the women saw any angel, as S. John seems to indicate, by whose account they are urged into this opinion. But this opposes the plain words of S. Mark. Besides, S. Matthew relates clearly that the women and the soldiers both saw the angel at the same time (xxviii. 4), and it is clear that before Peter and John came, the soldiers had seen the angel and gone away terrified. For Peter and John would not have come to the tomb so boldly unless they had heard from the women that the soldiers had gone away ; but this hardly applies to the women. It is no matter of wonder that they had the courage to come to the tomb while it was yet guarded by the soldiers ; for these are apt to be severe towards men when they spare the women. Besides, S. Luke (xxiv. 13) says that on that same day, as when two of the disciples were going to Emmaus, Christ joined Himself to them, and that they said (verses 21, 22, 23), "And now, besides all this, to-day is the third day since these things were done. Yea, and certain women also of our company affrighted us, who, before it was light, were at the sepulchre. And, not finding His body, came, saying, that they had also seen a vision of angels, who say that He is alive. And some of our people went to the sepulchre, and found it so as the women had

said ; but Him they found not." It cannot be doubted that the words "some of our people" refer to S. Peter and S. John ; the Evangelist had said that the women saw the vision of angels, and told it to Peter and the other disciples. To this should be added the greatest authorities, who think that when the women came first to the tomb they saw the angels. Among these is S. Greg. Nyss. (*De Resurr. Chri.*, *Orat.* ii.). As, then, they who say that the women came to the tomb twice do so only that they may not appear to contradict S. John, who seems to say that the women when they came the first time did not see the angels ; and as it has been sufficiently proved that they saw them when they came the first time, there is no reason why they should say that the women came twice. The passage in S. John shall shortly be explained, so as to show that there is no contradiction in it. It appears, therefore, both that the women only came once, and that when they came the first time they saw the angels.

2. The third question is more easily answered. *S. Mark* xvi. 4, 5 : "And, looking, they saw the stone rolled back. For it was very great. And entering into the sepulchre, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, clothed with a white robe ; and they were astonished." S. Mark means that they saw one angel inside the tomb, even if they saw another outside, as S. Matthew is commonly taken to mean. It would seem that the angel of whom S. Matthew speaks, and the one mentioned by S. Mark, were the same ; for they both used the same words. Each said, "Fear not" (*S. Matt.* xxviii. 5). "Fear not you : for I know that ye seek Jesus who was crucified. He is not here : for He is risen as He said. Come, see the place where the Lord was laid. And going quickly, tell ye His disciples that He is risen ; behold He will go before you into Galilee, there you shall see Him" (*S. Mark* xvi. 6). As, then, the angel of whom S. Matthew and S. Mark wrote

was the same angel—and S. Mark says in plain words that he was seen by the women inside the tomb, and S. Matthew does not say that he was seen outside, but only that he was sitting upon the stone which he had removed—it follows that he was seen not outside the tomb, which S. Matthew does not say, but inside it, which S. Mark does say. And most especially when the other Evangelists, S. Luke (xxiv. 4) and S. John (xx. 12), say that two angels were seen, not outside, but inside.

What mostly influences the maintainers of the other view is the words of S. Matthew (verse 2): "An angel of the Lord descended from heaven; and, coming, rolled back the stone, and sat upon it". The stone they conclude from S. Mark to have been outside the tomb and not inside of it. "Who," they say, "shall roll back;" and, therefore, they assume that it was at the door of the tomb, that is, outside it. It is matter of wonder that it has escaped the notice of authorities that there were two stones, and that each was rolled back by the angel. S. Augustin (*De Consens.*, iii. 24) thinks that the sepulchre alone did not contain the tomb of Christ, but that it was a building called by him a *maceria*, a wall of enclosure, having an outside arched door by which it was entered; and within this was the tomb where the body was laid, which was closed by another stone. That it was a tomb of this kind, Bede, Bocardus (*On Jerusalem and the Holy Land*), and all who have seen it agree *uno ore*. There were, therefore, two stones—one outside by which the door of the whole monument was closed, the other inside by which the tomb was closed; and the angels removed both—the first, that the women might enter; the second, that they might see that the tomb was empty. The angel did not sit upon the first, but upon the second; for if he had sat upon the first, the women would have been terrified at the first sight of him, and they would not have ventured to enter the tomb. It



was fit that the angel should have sat, not upon the first stone, but upon the second ; both to show that he had moved away the stone that the women might see that the sepulchre was empty ; and to point, as it were, with his finger to the place where Christ had been placed, and show that it was empty, as in verse 6.

When, therefore, S. Matthew says that the angel moved the stone, he means both stones. When he says that he sat upon it, he means the second stone which was inside the tomb. For, as he could not have sat upon both stones, he must have sat either upon the first or the second. S. Matthew does not say that he sat upon the first. S. Mark, S. Luke, and S. John clearly say that he sat upon the second, when they say that he sat inside ; and, therefore, S. Matthew also, when he says that he sat upon the stone, understands the second stone ; whence it follows that even, according to S. Matthew, the angel was seen by the women, not outside the tomb, but inside it. It will be objected that S. Matthew (verse 6) says that the angel said to the women, "Come, see the place where the Lord lay" ; as if they had not yet entered the tomb, but he were inviting them to do so. These words have deceived many into thinking that the women were invited by the angel to enter the tomb, whereas they were not invited to enter, but to come ; that is, to draw near and see the tomb. The angel did not say "Enter" but "Come". For they were then inside the tomb, as S. Mark and S. Luke state most clearly. Then, when they had come to the tomb and unexpectedly found the first stone, about which they had been anxious on the way, rolled back, they boldly entered. When they were inside, and saw the angel sitting upon the stone, they were astonished, and did not venture to approach the tomb. But the angel first directed them to lay aside their fear, saying, "Fear not" (verse 5), and then invited them to come, and see the tomb : "Come, see".

What S. Luke says (xxiv. 2, 3, 4) may be objected. He here indicates that the women had entered, not only into the monument but even to the tomb as well, which was within, and had seen that it was empty before the angel invited them, or they had even seen him.

The answer is that S. Luke spoke by anticipation, for he was desirous of passing on to relate that the women had not found Christ in the tomb, because He had risen ; and he therefore said this before stating that the angels were seen by them, and that by their testimony the Resurrection of Christ was confirmed.

Thus the first and second of the five questions proposed above have been answered.

The first by the proof that there were two angels, as S. Luke and S. John relate ; but because one only spoke with the women, we must believe that S. Matthew and S. Mark, as they especially desired to relate what the angels said to the women, make mention of one only. It would certainly have been superfluous that the other angel should speak, as he could only have repeated what the other had said. So, on the other hand, whilst more women than one came to the sepulchre, one only, Mary Magdalene, spoke both with the angels and with Christ. S. John mentions her alone ; but as S. Luke and S. John wished to show that the Resurrection of Christ was proved by the testimony of the angels, they were compelled to mention more angels than one. Thus it was fitting that at least two angels should appear as witnesses, that "by the mouth of two or three every word should be established". And we see in the similar case of the Ascension of Christ into heaven, two angels also appeared in white garments, who testified to them that He had gone up to heaven, and would so return (*Acts* i. 10).

But the words of S. Luke (xxiv. 5) seem opposed to this, and S. John (xx. 12) relates that the angels said to Magda-

lene, "Woman, why weepest thou?" The answer is easy. They speak by syllepsis, as often before; for example, the thieves on the cross, and as in *Heb.* xi. 33, 37. The Prophets "were cut asunder," whereas only one was so treated—Isaiah: "and stopped the mouths of lions," whereas only Daniel did so. The angels, then, are said by S. Luke and S. John to have spoken with the women because one of them did so.

The answer to the second question is clear *per se*. It has been proved that the angel, of whom S. Matthew speaks, sat upon the second stone, not outside the tomb but inside it; and, therefore, that there is no difference in this respect between S. Matthew and S. Mark and the other Evangelists.

The third question is how S. Matthew, S. Mark, and S. John say that the angels sat, and S. Luke that the angels stood. The question seems to depend on the proper sense of the word "stand". S. Augustin and his followers think that there was one angel, of whom S. Matthew and S. Mark speak, and others of whom S. Luke and S. John speak, and that the former sat while the latter stood. But what will they do with S. John, who says of the two angels, of whom S. Luke writes, that they sat, when S. Luke says that they stood? Some say that they sat at first (as in *S. Matt.*, *S. Mark*, and *S. John*), and when they spoke with the women they rose up and stood, as S. Luke says: a distinction very little necessary, for S. Luke's words may be more easily explained by the proper understanding of the word "stood". It has been said (vi. 5) that the word "stand" in both Latin and Greek does not always mean an upright position of body, but sometimes the mere presence alone, and at others repose alone; for he is not only said to stand who is in an upright position, but he who is simply present though he be sitting; as chap. xvi. 28, "There are some of them that stand here," that is, they

who are present; and *S. Mark* xi. 25, "And when ye stand to pray," where there is no command to stand upright, but to stand, that is, to pray in quiet or put themselves as it were in God's presence, for praying is to address God; and *S. Luke* vii. 37, 38, "And standing behind at His feet," she was not standing erect, but was prostrate at the feet of Christ, when she washed His feet with her tears and wiped them with the hairs of her head and kissed His feet; and *S. Luke* xviii. 11, "The Pharisee, standing, prayed," where it is not to be supposed that a man, and a hypocrite especially, stood to pray; and *S. John* i. 26, "There hath stood one," that is, among you, present with you.

The fourth question is answered by another similar question being asked. It is asked, how *S. John* says that *Mary Magdalene* alone saw the angels, whilst the other Evangelists say that there were more women who saw them? It may be asked in return, why *S. John* says that *Mary Magdalene* alone came to the tomb, when the other Evangelists say that more came than she? It was no intent of the Evangelists to describe fully every circumstance. There were more women than one around the cross of Christ and many men besides, as signified by *S. Luke* (xxiii. 49) and *S. Matthew* (xxvii. 55); yet he names three women alone, as being better known and more active, and no man at all. In the same manner *S. John* says that *Mary Magdalene* both alone came to the tomb and alone saw the angels, because it is not doubtful that *Mary Magdalene* took the chief part and was the highest in position of any. We may see this from the other Evangelists always, when naming the other women, placing her first, as in *S. Matt.* xxvii. 56, 61, and in this chapter, verse 1; *S. Mark* xv. 40; xvi. 1.

The fifth question, which alone of all seems to contain any real difficulty, turns upon the right understanding of *S. John*. How he seems to say that *Mary Magdalene*, when

she came to the sepulchre first, saw neither angel nor the Lord, but when she saw the stone rolled away she returned at once and told Peter and John, "They have taken away my Lord," &c. ; but he signifies that she returned afterwards and saw the angels and Christ. S. John seems to relate the whole so clearly and fully that most writers have thought that the other Evangelists, who appear to contradict him, are to be explained from him. The other Evangelists, however, seem so clearly to contradict him, that he is rather to be explained from them ; and if they have not so much perspicuity, we must still yield to them as superior in numbers. How can it be supposed that the three Evangelists conspired as if by design to speak obscurely ? It is more easy to suppose that one did so than that many did. That Mary Magdalene and the other women came only once to the tomb, and that before they told the above events to Peter and John they had seen the angels, has been clearly proved.

How, then, is S. John to be understood ? He, like the other Evangelists, did not keep the order of events, but such as happened at the same time are related, some first and others later. Mary Magdalene came, and she saw the angels at the same time. He says that she came and saw the stone rolled away first, and afterwards saw the angels. This would appear more likely if we could find a probable reason for this infraction of the order of events. S. Greg. Nyss. (*Orat. ii. de Resurrect.*) thinks that Mary was reluctant to say anything to Peter and John about the angels she had seen, because she doubted that they were real angels, and, therefore, that she did not say anything of the Resurrection, but only "They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre, and we know not where they have laid Him". S. John, in fact, appears to wish to pass over everything else, that he may hasten to the explanation of how he and Peter ran together to see the tomb, at

the first word of Mary Magdalene ; and he therefore omits the vision of the angels, and Christ, and describes his own and Peter's hastening to the tomb, not from any vainglory (for he was so far from this that he would not even mention his own name), but from his desire of proving the Resurrection of Christ, and that he might, as soon as possible, bear witness that he himself and Peter had actually seen it, and thus gain great belief for the history. But it may be said that not only was S. John silent on the subject, but that even Mary Magdalene herself did not tell Peter and John that she had seen the angels and Christ, but that she rather indicated that she had not done so, when she said, "They have taken away the Lord," &c. For if she had seen the angel and been taught by him that Christ had risen, she would have said so, and not that He had been taken out of the tomb ; and she would have proved her words both by the vision and by the testimony of the angels. In fact, she would have said what would have done much more to cause belief that she had seen Christ Himself.

What if she did not say to Peter and John that she had seen the angels and the Lord, because, as soon as they heard her words, not expecting anything more, they ran off to the tomb ? And what if she would not relate her vision of the angels and the Lord from prudence, but related the fact as if Christ had been taken out of the tomb—that she might the more incite them to go and see it and seek Him, believing that if they went to the tomb and saw the angels and Christ, as she had done, they would have no more need of her testimony ?

S. Luke, however (xxiv. 23), seems to oppose this idea. He says that the women told the disciples that they also had seen at the tomb a vision of angels, and that some of the disciples—that is, Peter and John—ran to the tomb. But it is not unlikely that the women wished at first to say nothing of their having seen the angels and Christ, nor of

this Resurrection, but only said, "They have taken away the Lord" (as if they thought that He had been removed by theft), that, as has been said, they might incite the disciples to go to the tomb. What was sufficient to arouse S. Peter and S. John, who were more ardent than the rest, was not enough to move the others, and, therefore, when those Apostles had gone out, they, to convince the others, related the whole more clearly, and told them that they had seen both the angels and Christ. And this was the cause of their being upbraided by Him: "At length He appeared to the eleven as they were at table, and He upbraided them with their incredulity and hardness of heart, because they did not believe them who had seen Him after He was risen again (*S. Mark* xvi. 14).

This explanation is both intelligible *per se*, and is incapable of refutation by those who do not receive it. In this way the Evangelists agree most perfectly among themselves. For S. John wished to relate his own and S. Peter's visit to the tomb first. When he had done this, he returned, by way of summary, to the explanation of the vision of the angels and of Christ (xx. 11). His assertion that Mary stooped, when S. Mark and S. Luke say that she entered the tomb, is not contradictory. She did both. She both entered and stooped that she might see the tomb; or she entered, stooping when she had brought not her feet but her head and body inside the sepulchre, that she might see the tomb.

#### Verse 4. *And for fear of him.*

For fear of the angel, of whom S. Matthew had last spoken. Although we may easily believe that the keepers were terrified by the earthquake, yet, as that might appear to be a natural event, they were thrown into much greater consternation by the sight of the angel. How they saw the angels when they themselves were outside and the

angels inside may be reasonably asked. It is probable that the angels, when they first came and removed the stone from the door of the tomb, showed themselves also outside, that the keepers might see them and be seized with terror. For they had come that the keepers might be witnesses of the Resurrection of Christ even against their will. It is also probable that the guards, when they saw that the stone had been removed, went into the tomb before the women came, to see if the body of Christ, which had been committed to their faith and keeping, were in the tomb, and that they then saw the angels sitting inside it.

*And became as dead men.*

The same thing happened to Daniel when he saw the angel (x. 8). The keepers feared, not with a mere human fear, lest the body of Christ should be required of them to whom it had been committed, and when they could not produce it (as if the disciples had either stolen it away through their negligence, or had bribed them to give it), that they should be punished : but they feared much more with a divine fear lest, when they saw the Resurrection of Christ and that it confirmed His Divinity, they should be punished from heaven, either by fire sent thence or by the earth opening, as men who had assisted the Jews in their wickedness ; and as Pilate, when he heard that Christ was the Son of God, feared to condemn Him, and sought occasion to set Him free (*S. John* xix. 8).

The women also feared when they saw the angels (verse 8 ; *S. Mark* xvi. 6-8 ; *S. Luke* xxiv. 5), but none of the Evangelists says that their fear was as great as that of the soldiers, who became as dead men. *S. Luke*, on the contrary, signifies that theirs was rather the fear of humility than the dread of any danger (xxiv. 5) ; for to bow the head to the ground was less a sign of fear than of humility.



Who, indeed, would not fear at the sudden and super-human sight of angels? Daniel feared (x. 8, 16): Zacharias feared (*S. Luke* i. 12): the Virgin Mary herself feared (*S. Luke* i. 29): but the good fear in a different manner to the bad, for an evil conscience increases fear to the latter. The evil fear, as wicked servants, lest they should meet punishment; the good fear, as sons, lest before the angels they appear too little reverent, and because human weakness is not able to endure a divine vision. The soldiers fear, and are as dead men: the women fear, but are not disheartened, because, like S. Antony, as S. Thomas in his commentary and S. Jerome on this passage say, when a good angel appears to good men, even if by his unexpected appearance he strike terror at first, he leaves in the end comfort and tranquillity. The angel, therefore, comforted the women, not the trembling soldiers (verse 5). "Fear not you," as S. Jerome and the poet Juvenius have observed. Such is the force in this passage, as shall be explained, of the word "you".

Verse 5. *And the angel answering.*

"Answering" is a Hebraism, by which ענה means both "to answer" and "to begin to speak," as explained on chaps. xi. 25, xxii. 1.

*Fear not you.*

As if the angel had said, "Let the soldiers fear who came with the evil intention of preventing if they could the Resurrection of Christ. You, who have come not to hinder Him, but to render to Him all the offices of piety and love, have no cause for fear." The word "you" has here the force of opposition to the soldiers, as has been observed by S. Cyril Jerus. (*Cat. Lect.*, xiv.), S. Chrysostom (*Hom.* xc.), S. Gregory (*Hom. in Evang.*, xxi.), Bede, Euthymius, Theo-

phylact. "Let those fear," says S. Gregory, "who love not the visits of citizens from on high ; let those live in dread who, oppressed by carnal desires, despair of being able to attain to their fellowship ; but for you, why should *you* fear who see in them your fellow-citizens ? "

*For I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified.*

The angel gives the reason why they need not fear. They had come, not with an evil but with a good and holy intention, to seek the body of Christ and perform the religious duty of anointing it. The angel shows them that he knows this, lest perhaps the women, although their consciences were good, might fear some evil from him, as, not knowing why they came, he might suspect that they intended to steal the body or do some other wrong. But the fact that the angel named Jesus by His proper name, and his saying that He was crucified, tended to cause faith in the women, and to show that he knew Christ truly, and that He was crucified and had died and been buried in that place, and had risen again. The angel (*S. Mark* xvi. 6) called Christ "Jesus of Nazareth who was crucified," which tends to the same result. S. Matthew omits the words "of Nazareth". S. Luke (xxiv. 5) uses other words: "Why seek ye the living with the dead ? " S. John (xx. 13) still others: "Woman, why weepest thou ? " It is to be believed that the angel uttered them all. The women first began to lament when they saw the door open, thinking that the body of Christ had been taken away. This is the meaning of *S. John* xx. 11: "Mary stood at the sepulchre without, weeping," naming only one woman, but understanding all. Soon after they entered the tomb weeping, and the angels said, "Why weep ye ? " S. John, speaking of Mary Magdalene, says that she alone answered for all (verse 73). The angel then answered, speaking for himself and the other

angel, "Fear not," &c. (*S. Matt.* xxviii. 5), as if gently and in kind words blaming their unbelief; for if they had had faith in the words of Christ which He spoke while yet alive, that He should rise again on the third day, they would not have sought the living among the dead, but would have believed for certain that He was alive. Lastly, he added what *S. Matthew*, *S. Mark*, and *S. Luke* all record: "He is not here, for He has risen as He said"; and he commanded them to go to the Apostles and tell them that Christ had risen, as the same three Evangelists relate.

Verse 6. *He is not here, for He is risen.*

It was not sufficient to say, "He is not here," for He might not have been there and yet not have risen again. He might have been carried thence, or His body stolen; and, therefore, the angel added, "for He is risen"; as if he had said, "He is not here: not because, as you suppose, He has been removed or stolen, but because He is risen again"; and that this might not appear new or strange, he added the words, "as He said," confirming Christ's Resurrection from His own words, and as silently observing the unbelief of the women; as if he had said, "If you had believed Christ when He said that He would rise again on the third day, you would not now need my testimony, but you would readily have believed".

*Come and see the place where the Lord was laid.*

What the angel had proved by his own testimony and by that of Christ, he now confirms by the evidence of the women's senses, and he endeavours to instil belief into their minds by the actual sight of the place: "Come and see the place," &c. In calling Christ "Lord," the angel confessed Him to be God; for who but God is Lord of angels? The angel seems to have used the same words deliberately as Mary had used before, as we learn from *S. John* xx. 2.

She had called Him her Lord; the angel called Him not only his own Lord, but the Lord of all, both men and angels. He showed this when he called Him Lord, absolutely and without addition.

We have purposely deferred to this place the question at what hour Christ rose from the dead; because in this place mention is first made of His Resurrection.

All admit that He arose in the night which intervened between the Sabbath and the first day of the week, which we call the Lord's day. Almost all ancient authors agree that He did not rise before midnight, though some, as S. Dionysius of Alexandria, in his letters to Basilides, from S. Matthew's words (verse 1)—"And in the end of the Sabbath, when it began to dawn towards the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulchre"—say that He rose in the beginning of the night. He was the author of this opinion, which is received by few, and has been answered above. That He rose in the middle of the night, as He was believed to have been born in the middle of the night, was the opinion of many, who, as Dionysius adds, therefore ended the Lent fast at midnight before the day of Pasch, as was ordered by the Eighty-ninth Canon of the Council of Constantinople in Trullo, as Balsamon states in his commentary to Dionysius. This is confirmed by the ancient custom of almost the whole Church, which used to celebrate at midnight the Mass of the Resurrection, which we now celebrate on the Saturday at about ten in the morning.

Others believe that He arose towards dawn, at or about the crowing of the cock. S. Greg. Nyss. (*Orat. ii. de Resurrect.*) inclines much to this opinion. S. Dionysius says that it was the custom of the Romans to end the fast at that hour, as believing that Christ rose then. Euthymius also states this as the opinion of all the early Fathers, and that he himself followed it as the most probable. It

is most certain, indeed, as S. Greg. Nyss. in the above-named oration, S. Jerome (*Quæst. 6 to Hedibias*), and Euthymius (*in loc.*) say that no man can know the hour at which Christ rose from the dead; for He Himself alone can know it who rose as He would, and when He would. But if certain proof be wanting, there is some room for conjecture; and in matters of uncertainty that which appears most probable may be received for truth, until the truth itself appear. We must believe that Christ rose about the dawn of day. For as the angels came down from heaven to witness of His Resurrection, it is probable that they descended immediately as He rose; lest, in the meantime, the soldiers or the priests who had closed the tomb had opened it, and, not finding the body, had concluded that it had been taken away by theft, and had published it as a fact, not with the gift of bribes, but gratis, and supposing themselves to be speaking the truth. That the angels came about dawn is clear, because the earthquake happened at the time of the arrival; and this, as S. Mark relates, took place as the women drew near the tomb, when the sun was just rising. This, however, is only a conjecture, and may be taken simply for what it is worth.

Verse 7. *And going quickly.*

The angel commanded them to go quickly that they might, as soon as possible, cheer those who were sad, by the most joyful news of the Resurrection, and sustain their failing faith before it gave way altogether. We learn from S. Mark (xvi. 7) that the angel said, "Go tell His disciples and Peter, that He goeth before you into Galilee; there you shall see Him as He told you". S. Peter was named especially, lest from his thrice-repeated denials of Christ he might think himself shut out from the benefit of the Resurrection. So say S. Gregory (*Hom. xxi. in Evang.*) and Euthymius.

*That He has risen.*

*Quia surrexit*, a Hebraism, as said before, for *surrexisse*.

*And behold He will go.*

The angel signifies that Christ had already gone into Galilee, either because he thought so, or because he knew that Christ intended to go there after His Resurrection, and show Himself to His disciples. Unless we take the present tense by a Hebraism for the future, as if the angel had said, "Behold He will go before you into Galilee, hasten as you may"; for he knew that Christ passed hither and thither in a moment. The angel was ignorant, apparently, of what was shortly to take place—that Christ would show Himself to the women as they returned to the city. He acted with the view of kindling the zeal of the disciples, that when they heard of Christ's having already gone into Galilee, they might hasten thither more readily, and not be reluctant to follow, if they had been so to go before.

Wonderful is the infirmity of human nature, and wonderful its inconsistency; for it was much more easy for them to follow Christ when He was going into Galilee and had now risen, and was become glorious, than to follow Him to the cross when infirm and weighed down with ignominy; and yet all promised this (xxvi. 35), although they did not perform it. For when these words were related by the women to the disciples, "they seemed to them as idle tales, and they did not believe them" (*S. Luke* xxiv. 11).

A twofold question arises here:

1. Why Christ wished to show Himself to the Apostles in Galilee, rather than in Judæa?

2. Why, contrarily to what He had determined and said, He showed Himself in Judæa before He went into Galilee?

Many answer the first question as follows:

Christ desired to appear to the disciples in Galilee, that He might converse with them and teach them more freely;

for in Judæa their dread of the priests and Pharisees might be a hindrance to them. So say S. Chrysostom (*Hom.* xc.) and Euthymius. S. Ambrose says the same (*On S. Luke* xxiv.).

Others say that as He had preached the Gospel in Galilee a long time, He had many disciples in the country, whom He wished to strengthen at the same time. S. Jerome and Bede give another, but allegorical reason: that Galilee, as its name indicates, was a very hog-stye of all vices, and it ought therefore to be purified by the presence of Christ, as Isaiah had said long before (ix. 1, 2), and as S. Matthew (iv. 15, 16) applied his words to the preaching of Christ.

But why did He not go there at once? This is the second question. Because He saw the Apostles lingering and doubting, and that they would not go into Galilee unless He first appeared to them in Jerusalem to confirm their faith. This is said by S. Ambrose. Christ did not therefore falsify His promise, but He exceeded it, for He did more than He promised. He had promised to appear to the disciples in Galilee, and He appeared also to them in Jerusalem; as S. Gregory of Nyssa says.

*Lo, I have foretold it to you.*

These words would tend to cause the disciples, when they should see Christ in Galilee, to believe that He was not a phantom nor a spirit, but Himself in verity, the true Christ, *ipsissimum Christum*; they would have seen that the angel had foretold the truth, and therefore that He could only have spoken from God. They must, therefore, have believed that it was Christ whom they saw, as it had been foretold by the same angel that they should see Him. So Samuel, to persuade Saul that what he had foretold to him should come to pass, foretold certain other things which Saul should experience on that same day, that these might confirm the others; *e.g.*, 1 *Kings* x. 2. In the same

way Christ said (*S. John* xiv. 29): "Now I have told you before it come to pass, that when it shall come to pass you may believe". S. Mark's words (xvi. 7) are slightly different, that the angel might say that it was not himself but Christ that foretold this, alluding to the words which He addressed to the disciples shortly before His death (xxvi. 32). Perhaps "he" should be read for "I," a lapse easily made by the change of one Greek, and the dropping out of one Latin, letter. If so, there will be no divarication between S. Matthew and S. Mark.

Verse 8. *And they went out quickly from the sepulchre with fear and great joy.*

They went out quickly, both at the command of the angel who had told them to do so (verse 7), and from fear at once, and joy. These feelings cause men to act thus. Why the women felt both at the same time can be more easily understood than described. They feared because they had seen the angels; and we fear the sight of heavenly and divine beings, as we are unable to endure it. They rejoiced because they had heard that Christ had risen again. It is said by S. Mark (xvi. 8), "But they, going out, fled from the sepulchre. For a trembling and fear had seized them, and they said nothing to any man, for they were afraid." The words, "They said nothing to any one," are not to be taken to mean that they did not speak to anyone whatever, not even to the Apostles, of what they had seen; for S. Luke (xxiv. 11, 22, 23) makes it clear that they told the disciples that they had seen the angels in the tomb; but S. Mark signifies that they kept such strict silence on the way, that, like those who are under the influence of great fear, they did not speak of what had happened, either to those whom they met or to one another.

Verse 9. *And behold Jesus met them.*

The account given by S. Mark and S. John does not



appear to agree very well with these words. S. Mark (xvi. 9) says, "But He, rising early the first day of the week, appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom He had cast seven devils," as if Christ did not then appear either to the other women or to Magdalene herself, as she went to the disciples, but at another time ; but S. John (xx. 13-17), when he had said that Mary Magdalene stood without the tomb weeping, and when she stooped down and looked into the sepulchre saw the angels, who asked her, "Woman, why weepest thou?" added, "Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid Him. When she had thus said, she turned herself back, and saw Jesus standing ; and she knew not that it was Jesus. Jesus saith to her : Woman, why weepest thou? whom seekest thou? She, thinking that it was the gardener, saith to Him : Sir, if thou hast taken Him away, tell me where thou hast laid Him, and I will take Him away. Jesus saith to her : Mary. She, turning, saith to Him : Rabboni, which is to say, Master. Jesus saith to her : Do not touch Me, for I am not yet ascended to My Father ; but go to My brethren and say to them, I ascend to My Father and to your Father, to My God and to your God."

As regards S. Mark, the difficulty is less ; for as it was his object to tell the disciples that Christ had appeared to the women, he passed by all the circumstances, and said that Christ rose on the same day : not speaking of the Resurrection, so to say, but of the rising up (*non de resurrectione sed de surrectione*), as if He had first sat down and then appeared to Mary Magdalene ; for the Hebrew speaks of "rising up" (*surgendi*) to undertake some work, although the person do not literally rise, as *Exod.* xxxii. 6 ; *S. Matt.* xxii. 11, 24. S. Mark had no wish to teach us at what hour Christ rose, which, as said on verse 6, is altogether uncertain, but at what hour He appeared to the women.

His having mentioned Mary Magdalene alone, may have been either because Christ appeared at first to her alone, as will be shortly shown, or because, although He appeared to all the other women as well, He first spoke to her alone.

The account of S. John has more difficulty. From his words some think that Christ showed Himself to the women twice—the first time to Mary Magdalene alone as she stood near the sepulchre and turned back, as S. John seems to say (xx. 14), and then to all the women who had come to the tomb, as they returned to tell the disciples. For when all who were in the tomb had prepared to go away, Mary Magdalene remained alone weeping. She then turned back and saw Christ ; and when He asked her why she wept or whom she sought, she answered, thinking Him the gardener, “ Sir, if Thou hast taken Him hence,” &c. Christ answered and called her by her name, Mary. The other events related by S. John then happened. She soon after left the tomb and overtook the other women, who had gone on before ; and when she was on the way with them, Christ appeared to them again, as described by S. Matthew. So think S. Augustin (*De Consens.*, iii. 24) and Severus (in the *Commentary of S. Thomas*).

Others suppose that there were indeed two appearances of Christ, but at different times—the first when Mary Magdalene came to the sepulchre alone, and that Christ was seen by her then, as St. John says ; then that she returned to the tomb with the other women, and as she was going back thence to the Apostles again, Christ met them in the way, as S. Matthew says. S. Gregory of Nyssa is the author of this opinion. The original difficulty lies in the supposition that Mary Magdalene came to the tomb twice and that Christ appeared to her twice. Why must we think this, when S. Matthew clearly signifies that all the women came to the tomb at the same time ? that all returned together, and Christ appeared to all as they returned ?

The statement of S. Mark that He appeared first to Mary Magdalene can easily be explained. The Evangelist opposes Mary Magdalene not to the other women but to the Apostles: the meaning being that Christ appeared to her not before He appeared to the other women, but before He appeared to the Apostles. For although not written, it is truly believed by all Catholics, that Christ appeared first of all to His own Mother. If so, the meaning cannot be that He appeared first to Mary Magdalene: that is, that He was seen by her before all the women. That S. Mark names Mary Magdalene alone is in no respect matter of wonder, as S. John mentions no other woman either as coming to the tomb, or returning, or seeing Christ; and it appears from the other Evangelists that others came with her to the tomb, and saw Christ on their return. Why S. Mark so mentioned her alone has been explained. She began to speak first, and perhaps, of all who were with her, she first saw Christ. As regards what S. John says, although it may appear somewhat difficult, it may be explained without much more difficulty.

1. He says that S. Mary Magdalene was standing by the tomb weeping. Then she turned and saw Christ. This may be understood not of her turning and looking back at the tomb, but of her returning on her way to the Apostles. For, although it may appear contradictory of this that she mistook Christ for the gardener, which she would not have done if she had not seen Him in the garden where the tomb was, this may be understood to mean that Christ appeared to the women as they were returning, but when they had not yet got out of the garden: or, if they had done this, yet that Christ appeared as if going to the garden, or that He was in such guise as to be easily mistaken for the gardener, and that Mary thought Him to be such. The words, too, "Why weepest thou?" may be taken to mean that on their return they all, and most

especially S. Mary Magdalene, wept, because, as S. Gregory of Nyssa says, and as is clear from S. John, she did not wholly believe even the angel when he said that Christ had risen (*Orat. de Christ. Incarnat.*). For after his words she still wept, as if believing that Christ had not risen, but had been taken away by stealth. And thus she said, "Sir, if thou hast taken Him hence, tell me," as she had said to the Apostles, "They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre, and we know not where they have laid Him"; for when she said this she had seen the angel, as we have fully proved (verse 3). That S. John named Mary alone is less wonderful than that S. Mark did so, for he had said that she did not come alone to the tomb, but that other women were with her. S. John, however, said that she came alone. It would be rash to adopt this opinion against so many authorities, did not S. Augustin take the same view (*Orat. de Christ. Incarnat.*).

*All hail.*

שלמלו *Pax vobis.* So the Hebrews spoke, but the Greeks said, *χαλπετε, avete.* The Hebrews use this form of address most especially when they bid those to whom they speak not to fear but be of good heart, as *Gen. xliii. 23*; *Judges vi. 23*; *xix. 20.* It agrees well with this passage, because Christ saw that the women were filled with fear, as if He had said, "Peace be with you, be of good cheer, I come not as an enemy, but as a friend". So, in the following verse, He says, "Fear not".

*But they came up and took hold of His feet.*

S. John (xx. 17) signifies that S. Mary Magdalene did not touch the feet of Christ, for He forbade her. If, as appears to be the case, this is the same vision as the one mentioned by S. John, it is easy to explain the points on which the two Evangelists seem at issue. S. John does not say that S. Mary Magdalene did not touch the feet of

Christ, but that Christ said, "Do not touch Me," and perhaps, as many think, when He said this she had already touched them. Perhaps, from the strength and pertinacity of her love, she had touched them despite His prohibition. We read an instance of this in chap. ix. 30, 31, when Christ cured the blind men and commanded them to tell no man, but they thought it a kind of piety and obedience rather to break His command.

S. John says that S. Mary Magdalene alone was so forbidden. What if all were so forbidden, but S. John only mentioned her, as he had said that she alone came to the tomb, and she alone saw Christ and thus was forbidden to touch Him? The other Evangelists who speak of the other women do not say that they were forbidden, nor that S. Mary Magdalene was forbidden. As, therefore, they pass over what was done in the case of S. Mary Magdalene, they may have passed over the same thing that was done in that of the other women. It was not what Christ forbade, but what was done. They did not intend to record the will of Christ, but the love of the women for Him.

If, as many think, this was a different vision to that described by S. John, a question arises—not the same, but very similar—why Christ forbade Mary Magdalene only to touch Him there, and did not forbid her and the other women to touch Him here? What if He also forbade them here, but the Evangelist omitted to mention it? S. John, because he did not relate this vision, if it be a different one: the others because, although they relate it, yet, as has just been said, they wished to relate not what Christ forbade, but what the women did? And thus, although it is not related either that all were permitted, or that all were forbidden, to touch Him, yet it might have been related. Hence, whether all or some touched Him, whether all or some were forbidden to touch Him, yet

there remain two questions: 1. Why either all or some touched Him? all certainly wished to do so. 2. Why Christ forbade either all the women, or certainly Mary Magdalene alone, to touch Him, or at least willed to do so? To the first question Nature herself makes reply. For what Christian, seeing Christ raised from the dead before him, would not be suddenly overpowered by joy, and rush into His arms? It was the nature of womanly modesty and respect not to embrace the body but the feet, as Theophylact and Euthymius say. It was also among the Jews a kind of reverence and adoration, especially of women to men, to touch the feet, as (*Exod.* iv. 25) Sephora touched the feet of her husband as if in deprecation, and, in 4 *Kings* iv. 27, the Sunamite woman, when she had come to Elisæus, touched his feet, and prayed him to come and raise up her son. The Greeks had the same custom (*Iliad*, A. 500), and Pliny has written upon it at length. It is certain that the custom flourished long in the Church, for, as we find in the decrees of councils, those who saluted bishops used to touch their knees. In this manner Mary Magdalene, from reverence (*S. Luke* vii. 38), held the feet of Christ, and all the women here did the same. The Evangelist explains this, and adds immediately, "and adored". They touched His feet that they might adore. Another reason of their touching Him might have been to prove whether He were the true Christ, or a spirit which deluded them by the appearance of Christ. Theophylact says that many thought this. The women might think this not without example, for even the Apostles, as *S. Luke* says (xxiv. 37), when they first saw Christ, thought that they saw a spirit.

But why did Christ forbid the women, or certainly Mary Magdalene, to touch Him? The reason is given by Christ Himself: "I am not yet ascended to My Father". But this reason makes the question more difficult. For what

is the meaning of those words, as if, after He had ascended to the Father, she might touch Him, as S. Augustin says more than once? But she seemed able to touch Him, and it appears as if she ought to have touched Him, for the reason that He had not yet ascended to the Father. If He had done so, she neither ought to have touched Him nor could she have done so. Some think that Christ did not altogether forbid Himself to be touched, but to be touched in the manner in which Mary seemed to touch Him; that is, as a man who would live with his friends, and suffer himself to be touched in the same manner as He used to do before His death: when He was not to live with them as before, but after the manner of a spirit, who is neither seen nor touched, but sometimes appears and sometimes disappears. So say S. Justin (*Quæst.* 48 *ad Orthod.*) and S. Cyril (*On S. John* xii. 50). Hence the custom was introduced into the Church, when the mysteries had been consecrated by the Holy Spirit, to cry "*Sancta Sanctis*," as Christ, before He ascended and sent the Holy Ghost on the Apostles, would not suffer Himself to be touched by the women. For if He offered Himself to be touched by the Apostles, and said, "Handle Me and see" (*S. Luke* xxiv. 39); and if He commanded S. Thomas to put his finger into His side, and in the place of the nails, He did it necessarily to cure his unbelief; as before His death He used to heal the sick by His touch. An ingenious explanation, but where is the connection with the words, "I am not yet ascended to My Father"?

Others think that Mary Magdalene was not allowed to touch Christ because she was unworthy to do this, who had doubted about His Resurrection, even when the angels had borne testimony to it, and she herself was seeking the living among the dead. S. Chrysostom (*Hom. on John Bapt.*), S. Ambrose (*Serm.* lviii., and *On Ps.* xlvi., and *Comm. on S. Luke* x.), S. Jerome (*Quæst.* 5 *to Hedibias*,

*Letter to Paul on the Death of Blesilla*), S. Augustin (*Ep.* lviii.).

Others think it a mystery, and that S. Mary Magdalene signifies the Church of the Gentiles, which did not believe before—to believe, being to touch Christ before He ascended to the Father. S. Augustin explains it thus, in his treatise on *S. John* xxvi. and cxxi. Granting it to be a mystery, yet it cannot be granted to be only a mystery, and nothing more.

S. Augustin gives another explanation in two of his writings (*Ep.* ccxxii. and *De Trinit.*, iv. 3). His words are as follows: "Thus Jesus desired Himself to be believed in"; that is, to be spiritually touched, because He and the Father were one. He, in a manner, ascends to the Father in his most inward feelings, who has become so far a proficient in Him as to acknowledge Him to be the equal of the Father, otherwise He is not rightly touched; that is, He is not rightly believed in: "For I have not yet ascended to My Father: then shalt thou touch Me when thou believest Me to be God, and not unequal to the Father". Fulgentius, the disciple of S. Augustin (*Lib.* ii. to *Thrasymundus*), and S. Chrysostom (*Hom.* v. de *Resurrect.*) say the same. "Touch me not," he says, "you ought not to touch me to believe."

Calvin, without warrant or authority, says that Christ did not speak these words until S. Mary Magdalene had not only touched Christ's feet, but had touched them too closely and fondled them; as if He forbade not the simple touch, but the too close and intimate touch. But what have the words that follow, "I am not yet ascended," to do with too close contact? Nor shall it be passed over in silence, that Calvin terms Mary Magdalene's piety and devotion "superstition," and her love for Christ "foolish fervour". To write this is dreadful; but it would appear, in the open interest of the Church, that Catholics should know how



heretics speak of holy men and women, and from their words judge of their religion and doctrine.

To return to the subject. None of the above explanations appear sufficient, because they do not possess any connection with, nor in any way account for, Christ's addition, "I am not yet ascended to My Father". It may, perhaps, be allowed me to suggest that S. Mary Magdalene wished to touch Christ as if she were not to see Him more; and she feared that He would depart immediately, or ascend to the Father, and she should have no future opportunity of embracing or worshipping Him. In this sense He answers, "Touch Me not"; as if to say, "Thou wilt have sufficient time to touch Me frequently before I go up to My Father; touch Me not now, cling not to My feet now, but go quickly to My brethren, and tell them to go into Galilee, where they shall see Me". The only point, apparently, against this explanation is that Christ does not say, "I shall not ascend," or, "I do not ascend," but "I have not yet ascended". The answer is obvious. We speak thus in common when we desire to signify that we are not about to go away immediately, but that we have still sufficient time to converse with our friends. It has also been said before, more than once, that words frequently mean not the actual and literal act, but the will and resolution to act. Peter said, "I go a-fishing" (*S. John* xxi. 3); that is, I have resolved to go, but he was not actually going. The others answered, "We also come with thee"; that is, we wish to come, but they were not actually coming. In the same manner Christ says, "I have not yet ascended"; that is, "I have not yet resolved to ascend to My Father". If, therefore, Christ forbade all the women to touch Him, He forbade them in this sense. If He forbade Mary Magdalene, He forbade her alone, because she alone touched Him in this sense, and with this intention. He did not therefore forbid the other disciples

to do so, but rather encouraged them (*S. Luke* xxiv. 39 ; *S. John* xx. 27).

It has often been asked why Christ was seen by the women before the men, and especially the Apostles. One reason may easily occur to the mind. The women saw Him first because they were the first to seek Him. Their diligence was worthy of that reward. S. Cyprian says : "They saw Him first and recognised Him. They loved Him more ardently, and sought Him more eagerly" (*Serm. de Resurrect.*). And S. Jerome, "They who so sought Him, and so ran to Him, deserved to meet their risen Lord, and to hear first 'His peace be to you,' that the curse of the woman Eve might be reversed". But why did the women seek Him first rather than the men? It is not for us to weigh the zeal and piety of the women with those of the Apostles, and to lay it down that the women, and not the Apostles, came to seek Christ, because they had more zeal towards Him and more piety. This we must leave to God. We can see another and very obvious reason. The women came, desiring to anoint the body of Christ ; and this, and the offices of the dead, were more the employment of women than men. The women, therefore, did not ask Christ, but the body of Christ ; and they were therefore reprehended by the angels : "Why seek ye the living with the dead?" Yet, because their work was one of devotion, it did not want its reward : that they should be the first to see Christ. There may be another reason for Christ's having appeared to the women before the men. When the disciples fled hither and thither, the women remained firm, not only until the death of Christ, but also until the end of His burial (*S. Luke* xxiii. 55). They who had been witnesses of His death and burial were therefore able to be witnesses of His Resurrection. For Christ knew that the women would believe more easily than the Apostles, when they had seen Him, as the

nature of women is more prone to believe than that of men. The result proved this. For we find that the Apostles, even when they had seen Christ, still doubted (verse 17 ; *S. Luke* xxiv. 38, 39). The women, when they saw and heard the angel, doubted, as we learn from *S. John* ; but no Evangelist tells us that they did so when they saw Christ. Christ desired, therefore, through the women who believed in His Resurrection, to prepare the Apostles gradually to believe in it also.

It may be asked why Christ Himself did not appear to the women before the angels. The reason is obvious. They would not have believed that He was Christ unless they had first been taught by the angel that He had risen.

Verse 10. *Then Jesus said to them, Fear not.*

It is very probable that the women came to the feet of Christ, although, on the one hand, filled with sudden joy because they saw Him before them, yet that, on the other, they trembled and doubted whether He were not a phantom before they saw Him nearer and recognised Him and heard Him speak ; and that it was for this reason that He said unto them, "Fear not".

*Go tell.*

Christ commanded them to do the same thing as the angels had done, that He might confirm the truth of the angelic vision. Thus a mutual service was performed by Christ to the angels, and by the angels to Christ.

*My brethren.*

Some suppose that the word "brethren" here meant only the relatives of Christ, but it should be taken to include all His disciples, as the angel said (verse 7), for the women did not tell only His personal kindred of His

Resurrection, but all the Apostles (verse 16; *S. Luke* xxiv. 10; *S. John* xx. 18). Christ calls all His disciples His brethren, because, although in a different sense to Himself, they were all sons of God, and did His will as He said (xii. 48-50; *Ps.* xxi. 23), as explained by S. Paul (*Heb.* ii. 12). Christ here calls them His brethren very opportunely, that He might both show Himself to be Christ, and relieve their minds when depressed by fear, and prevail on them to come to Him.

*To go into Galilee.*

(*Vide* verse 7). Christ knew that the Apostles would not go into Galilee on the sole testimony of the women, but He did what lay in Him, and because it was expedient that they should go there and see Him there first. He, however, not the less directed them to go thither, because, as we have frequently seen, Christ orders that to be done, not that would be, but that He knew ought to be, done.

Verse 11. *Who, when they were departed, behold some of the guards.*

They went to tell the Apostles, as directed by Christ and the angels. It would appear that all the keepers did not come before the chief priests. There have been many conjectures on this. 1. That the others were terrified and only thought, if possible, of concealing themselves, to escape punishment for having neglected their watch. 2. They dared not tell the truth to the priests, as they would not believe them, but would cast the blame upon them as if they had been guilty of falsehood, and had sold the body of Christ to His disciples, and endeavoured to conceal their treachery by the fiction of a miracle. 3. They who came may have come as a deputation from the rest, as the poet Juvenecus says, and as may

be concluded from verse 11. For not only to the deputation but to the others also money was given to induce them to publish the falsehood. Some think that, in the hope of extorting money from the priests, the soldiers related what they had seen, knowing that though the others were the most avaricious of men, yet that they were filled with such hostility to Christ, and feared so greatly lest He should be believed to have risen again, that they would probably be induced without difficulty to give them money to conceal His Resurrection. This, however, is not easy of belief, for they would scarcely have incurred the risk to themselves of capital punishment on so uncertain a hope. They came, therefore, not to extort money, but to give an account of their watch, lest they should be accused before the governor of neglect of duty.

Verse 12. *And they assembled together with the ancients.*

The ancients, that is, the Scribes ; for a council at Jerusalem consisted of these classes, as has been described on chap. ii. 4. The hardened malice of the priests against the known truth is detestable ; and as they were the most avaricious of men, they purchased only falsehood and their own condemnation. But truth cannot be overcome by money. And we can easily believe that the very men who were bought over to publish falsehoods, the soldiers, published among their acquaintance both the glorious Resurrection of Christ and the infamy of the priests who gave them money to darken it.

Verse 14. *And if the governor shall hear of this.*

Ἐπὶ τοῦ ἡγεμονος. *Apud præsidem* or *Coram præside*. That is, if the report reach him. This is the force of ἐπὶ, as in 1 *Tim.* vi. 13, where it is rendered in our version *sub*, as if it had been written ὑπό. Perhaps, in this passage as

in others, ἀπό is put for ἐπί, which, as has been said before, is joined to the agent with verbs passive, and thus we have the expression *a præside*. The soldiers had reason to fear being punished by the governor, either for neglect of their watch or their falsehood. Against this danger the priests promised their assistance, that by their own falsehood, in addition to that of the soldiers, they might succeed in persuading and convincing the governor. He would readily, they thought, believe them if they who ought to have been the first to accuse them took their parts. "The keepers," says S. Hilary, "who saw all that happened, purchased with money their silence on the Resurrection, and their falsehood about the theft of the body" (*Can. xxxiii. in S. Matt.*). This has been elegantly and forcibly commented on by the poet Sedulius.

"Fare, improbe custos.

Responde scelerate cohors si Christus, ut audes  
Dicere, concluso, furtim productus ab antro,  
Sopitos latuit, cujus latet intus amictus  
Cujus ad exuvias sedet angelus? anne beati  
Corporis ablator velocius esse putavit  
Solvere contextum quam devectare ligatum?  
Cum mora sit furtis contraria? cautius ergo  
Cum domino potuere magis sua lintea tolli  
Mentita est vox vana sibi, tamen ista figuram  
Res habet egregiam, Judæis constat ademptum,  
Quem nos, devoto portamus pectore Christum."

Say, wicked keeper, say, atrocious band,  
If from the fast-closed tomb by robbers' hand,  
Unseen by sleeping guards, as you declare,  
The Christ was brought—whose clothes are lying there?  
Whose is that winding-sheet, which angels bright  
Sit watching, clad in robes of shining white?  
When fatal had been all unwise delay,  
Why should the robbers there still lingering stay,  
When they the blessed form must slow unwind  
From burial clothes, left there for men to find?  
Vain, lying tale! But wondrous is the truth:  
For Him, who, Jews affirm, was, without ruth,  
Stolen from his rock-hewn bed of deathly rest  
We ever bear enshrined within our breast!

Verse 15. *And this word was spread abroad among the Jews even unto this day.*

"This word," namely, that Christ was stolen away by the disciples. So S. Chrysostom (*Hom. xci. on S. Matt.*), Euthymius (in his commentary), and Rabanus (in S. Thomas) explain it. This was indeed the almost universal opinion; though it does not appear unreasonable, if it be referred to the words of the Evangelist, that the falsehood was published abroad, even among the Jews themselves, that the soldiers had money given to them by the priests to say that the disciples stole away the body while they slept. There seems no objection to this view but the want of authority. Indeed, it may appear more probable *per se*, because the Evangelist had more reason for saying this than that which the commentators suppose him to have said. For it was more in accordance with the history that the Evangelist should say that the falsehood of the priests did not escape the knowledge of the Jews themselves (that no one might suppose him guilty of bringing a false accusation against them), than it would be to say that the Jews believed Christ to have been furtively carried off by the disciples, the exposition of which the history did not require of him.

Verse 16. *And the eleven disciples.*

Judas had either hung himself, as is the general opinion, or, having lost all hope of salvation, he had thought of doing so. At least he had not ventured to return to the communion of the Apostles. The prophecy of David (*Ps. lxxviii. 26*), as S. Peter explains it (*Acts i. 20*), must be fulfilled. See on chap. xxvii. 5.

*Went into Galilee.*

Not immediately, but after eight days at least, as S. Augustin proves (*De Cons.*, iii. 25). S. Matthew passes

over many circumstances which the other Evangelists mention as having been done by the Apostles during the eight days which they spent at Jerusalem. That this may be understood clearly and in proper order, it will be well to relate at what time and to what persons Christ appeared after His Resurrection.

1. He appeared to His mother. Not that the Evangelists say so, but because it was right that He should have done so.

2. On the second day He appeared to S. Mary Magdalene, either alone, as S. Augustin and most others suppose, or, as has been said above, with the other women who came with her to the tomb (*S. John* xx. 12).

3. He appeared, as most think, to all the women who came to the tomb on their return to the city. This happened on the same day.

4. On the same day also He is believed to have appeared to S. Peter, either alone, as S. Leo thinks (*Cont. M. Constant.*, xv.), or, as is probable, to S. John also, when they had returned from the tomb (*S. Luke* xxiv. 13; *1 Cor.* xv. 3, 4, 5).

5. On the same day again He was seen by the two disciples as they were going to Emmaus (*S. Luke* xxiv. 13).

6. On the same day, about evening, He appeared to the ten disciples when they were assembled in a house in Jerusalem in the absence of S. Thomas. Hence it follows that He supped with those two disciples at Emmaus, as S. Luke says, and appeared to the ten disciples at Jerusalem; for, like a spirit, He passed over great distances in a moment of time. These six appearances happened on the same day as His Resurrection.

7. After eight days He appeared to the eleven in the presence of S. Thomas at Jerusalem (*S. John* xx. 26). Although S. Jerome thinks, but apparently with little probability, that this appearance took place on the mountain of Galilee mentioned by S. Matthew.



8. He was seen by the seven disciples : Peter, Thomas, the two sons of Zebedee, Nathaniel, and two others, whom the Evangelist does not name, as they were fishing in the Sea of Galilee (*S. John* xxi. 1, 2). Hence, when S. John says, "This was the third time that Jesus was manifested to His disciples" (verse 14), he is not to be understood as meaning that Christ had been only seen three times before, for the contrary has been proved above ; but, either, as S. Augustin explains (*De Cons.*, iii. 25), the word "third" is to be understood, not of the number of appearances, as if Christ then appeared for the third time, but to the number of the days on which He appeared. In this manner He appeared the third time. For on the first day of His Resurrection He appeared six times; eight days after He appeared again ; now, for the third time, as the disciples were fishing : or perhaps S. John speaks not of any particular appearance, but of a public and general one in which Christ was seen either by all the disciples at once, or by most of them. For although He had appeared to His Mother in private, and to Peter, and to the two disciples as they went to Emmaus, He had not appeared to all or to most of them together, but twice before : first, on the day of His Resurrection, when Thomas was absent ; secondly, eight days after, when Thomas was present ; thirdly, on this occasion, when the seven disciples were fishing in the sea of Tiberias. For the ninth time He appeared to all the disciples at once on Mount Galilee, as described in this place by S. Matthew. This, in the opinion of S. Chrysostom, was the last appearance before the Ascension. S. Augustin adds, as the tenth, that in which He was seen by the disciples on His ascent into heaven. From *1 Cor.* xv. 6, 7, there appear to have probably been two others. If we add to these that which S. Paul describes, as made to himself after the Ascension, there will be altogether thirteen appearances.

*Unto the mountain where Jesus had appointed them.*

The Evangelists do not relate that Christ said anything to the women about the mountain; nor does it appear whether He appointed this to them or to the Apostles. It is clear, however, from this passage that He spoke on some occasion about it; either, as Euthymius thinks, before His death, when He said to them, "After I shall be risen again I will go before you into Galilee" (xxvi. 32), or after the Resurrection, when, in the opinion of others, He appeared to the disciples at Jerusalem. It may easily be conjectured why He directed the disciples to go to the mountain. He desired to speak to them freely and without judges, and whenever He did this He led them into a mountain apart, as in chaps. xiv. 23; xv. 29; xvii. 1; as Euthymius has shown. What mountain it was is a matter of uncertainty. It must, however, have been one somewhere near the Sea of Tiberias. For the disciples went from the mountain where they were to the sea, as a place close at hand to fish (*S. John* xxi. 2). Thus the opinion of those who think that this was the mountain from which Christ was afterwards taken up into heaven cannot possibly be correct; for this, S. Matthew says, was in Galilee, but that of the Ascension was a mile, or, as some say, two miles, from Jerusalem, as is also shown from *Acts* i. 12. Others think that it was the mountain on which Christ was transfigured, and which they called Tabor. On this, *vid.* chap. xvii. 2.

Verse 17. *And seeing Him they adored.*

To their inward belief they added external adoration, confessing Him to be not only Christ, but also true God; as they could now no longer doubt of His Resurrection. The Evangelist opposes adoration to doubt, adding immediately, "But some doubted". On these words it has been asked how the disciples could doubt after so many and

plain appearances. Some say that the doubters were none of the eleven disciples, but some of the others who also had that name ; for these had not seen Christ after His Resurrection. Theophylact is of this opinion. Others think that the words were spoken of the Apostles themselves ; not that they both worshipped and doubted, at the same time and in the same place, but that they who now worshipped on the mountain had doubted before in Jerusalem. Theophylact mentions this opinion with approbation. It is, however, unquestionable that the Evangelist meant not only to distinguish between times and places, but persons also, and to say that some believed and worshipped, but that others doubted. It is evident that all did not doubt. S. Matthew is not therefore to be understood as meaning that the same persons both doubted and worshipped.

Others are of opinion that some of the Apostles, as soon as they saw Christ on the mountain, fell at His feet in adoration ; while others hesitated and delayed, not as doubting of His Resurrection and Divinity, but whether He whom they then saw, and whom they had often seen in others places since His Resurrection, were Christ. So S. Chrysostom (*Hom. xci. on S. Matt.*), S. Greg. Nyss. (*Orat. ii. de Resurr.*), Juvencus, and Euthymius.

Others say that the words apply, not to this vision on the mountain in Galilee, but to that at Jerusalem when S. Thomas doubted, and when the other disciples thought that they had seen a spirit (*S. Luke xxiv. 37 ; S. John xx. 25, 27*) ; for S. Matthew, for the sake of brevity, compressed all the visions into one, and only mentioned what was notable in each. But it had happened that some disciples, and especially S. Thomas, had doubted. S. Matthew said, therefore, " But some doubted," not, that is, at the mountain, but previously at Jerusalem. It will be said that not only S. Thomas at Jerusalem, but almost

all the other disciples doubted, and thought Christ a spirit (*S. Luke* xxiv. 37). It has been urged, and with probability, by those who take this view, that S. Luke said generally that the disciples thought that they saw a spirit. Not that they all thought so, but that some did; as S. Matthew (xxvii. 44) relates that the thieves on the cross reviled Christ, when only one did so. This opinion seems probable, and it finds favour with Bede and Theophylact also.

Verse 18. *And Jesus coming.*

Some think that this did not happen now, but on the last occasion of Christ's showing Himself to His disciples, when He ascended into heaven. This appears very probable. For S. John (xxi. 15 and following) relates many things that have been passed over by the other Evangelists, and which happened after the appearance at the mountain in Galilee before this and before the events now described by S. Matthew took place. Such are Christ's asking Peter thrice if he loved Him, and giving him the charge to feed His sheep: His signifying by what death He should die: Peter's question about John, "Lord, and what shall this man do?" (xxi. 21), and Christ's answer (verse 23), all which, *Deo adjuvante*, shall be explained in the *Commentary on S. John*.

*All power is given to Me in heaven and in earth.*

Before Christ gave the Apostles the power of preaching the Gospel, He said that all power was given to Him in heaven and on earth. His object was to show that He assumed nothing arbitrarily to Himself; that He gave nothing to them which He did not possess Himself; and, as is proverbially said, He showed them His letters patent, by which it is seen by what authority He made them Apostles, and bestowed such powers upon them.

It may seem strange that He should say, "All power is given to Me," when He has all power, *ipse per se*. The followers of Arius did not overlook this. They brought the above with other passages of Scripture against the Divinity of Christ; saying that He could not be God in whom power was not innate, but on whom it was conferred (S. Athanasius, *Deus ex Deo*; and S. Cyril, ii. 73, *On S. John*). Those ancient Fathers answered in two ways. 1. That Christ said this, because when He was made man, He received that power with the human nature, that He might share it with us. He implies therefore that it was given to Him, not so much for Himself, as for us. So reasons S. Athanasius. 2. He received that power indeed as man, which as God He had by nature (S. Gregory of Nyssa, S. Cyril of Alexandria). They could allow without difficulty that as He was God He had received from the Father all power, as well as the divine nature, by eternal generation, as in S. *Luke* x. 22. This is true, but perhaps hardly sufficient. For Christ speaks here not of any kind of power whatever, but of that which He gave to the Apostles; that is, the power of gaining and recruiting His spiritual kingdom, to which end He sent His Apostles. He speaks as if before His Resurrection He had it not, as S. Athanasius observes in another place. For He said, as if of a new matter, "All power is given to Me". He did not speak of that power which He had as God, nor of that which He had as man, but of that which He had as the Redeemer of mankind, and which He had gained through His Death and Resurrection. For as He had redeemed all men by His blood, He had the right to gather them all into His kingdom, and to make them, as it were, His subjects. It is of this power that the Father speaks (*Ps.* ii. 8; cix. 1; *Isa.* xlix. 6, 8, 9). He speaks of it Himself in *Dan.* vii. 13, 14; and through S. John (xvi.

33). This is the power which He says was given to Him by His Death and Resurrection, because He merited it (*Philip*. ii. 9). By this power He sent His Apostles to extend the boundaries of His kingdom; as Vigilius seems rightly to explain against Eutyches (lib. v.). The words "in heaven and earth" were uttered by Him that He might declare Himself to have, as S. Paul says, the power of ruling everywhere. One part of this kingdom of His, that which is in heaven, was long since wholly gained and pacified. The other, that on earth, has yet to be fully acquired by spiritual warfare. To this office the Apostles were sent by Him.

Verse 19. *Going.*

Christ means going into the whole earth, as He had said, "All power," &c. He Himself ascended into heaven, that is, that part of His kingdom which was now at length pacified, that He might sit on His throne on the right hand of His Father. He sent the Apostles into the other part of it—that is, into all the earth—to recall all men to Himself. S. Mark (xvi. 15) describes this more fully: "Go ye into the whole world, and preach the Gospel to every creature". Christ opposes the whole world to the boundary line of the Jews, by which He had previously limited the embassy of the Apostles (x. 5). As He was then, by hereditary right as it were, king of the Jews, He sent His Apostles to them alone. Now, by His Death and Resurrection, He had gained the power of ruling over all men, and thus He sends the Apostles into the whole world, declaring that by His Death the wall which had kept the kingdom of the Jews inclosed on all sides, within their own bounds, was broken down, as is said by S. Paul (*Ephes.* ii. 14), and that the limits of His kingdom were therefore to be extended farther; nor were there to be any other bounds to that kingdom—

that is, the Church—than those of the entire world (*Ps.* lxxi. 8). God was known before in Judæa alone, now He was to be known everywhere (*Ps.* xvii. 44, 45; *Isa.* lxvi. 1; *Osee* ii. 23; *Rom.* ix. 25). “As, therefore, you are sent by Me, to whom is given all power in heaven and earth, and that power is communicated from Me to you”—for this is the force of the word “therefore”—“teach not human wisdom, for nothing is more adverse to My kingdom (1 *Cor.* iii. 19), but divine, which is foolishness to men. Teach My cross” (1 *Cor.* i. 23). Christ showed them what to teach (*S. Mark* xvi. 15).

These words were perverted, not only by the modern Anabaptists, but also by some Fathers of old, as Tertullian (*De Bapt.*) and Nicetas in his commentary on S. Gregory Nazianzen (*Oration on Holy Baptism*), to prove that Baptism ought not to be given to infants except when in peril of death, because Christ commanded that those who were to be baptised should first be taught, and this cannot be done to infants. They do not see that Christ does not forbid those who cannot be taught to be baptised, but that He only commands all who have been taught before to be baptised. That they who are not yet capable of learning, if we wish them to be saved, ought to be baptised, He has taught elsewhere (*S. John* iii. 5). Hence Calvin and his followers, who hold that this passage applies not to the Sacrament of Baptism but to the regeneration of faith, have no sufficient evidence from Scripture of the necessity of infant baptism.

*Baptising them in the name of the Father, and of the Son,  
and of the Holy Ghost.*

To the doctrine of Baptism Christ unites the Sacrament, not, as Calvin teaches, as the sign of grace already received, but as the sign and profession of doctrine and faith. Thus among the Greeks, βαπτίζειν means to dip

into water, to wash, to blot out, and, as Tertullian renders it, to sprinkle. Thus the matter of the Sacrament is explained by the meaning of the word ; that baptism should be performed by water, as Christ Himself more forcibly expresses it in *S. John* iii. 5. It is evident that the Apostles never baptised with anything but water, and there was much contention between the disciples of Christ and John, because the disciples of Christ, like those of John, baptised with water (*S. John* iii. 26). It was also decided by S. Philip in the case of the eunuch of Queen Candace, that those who believe in Christ should be baptised with water (*Acts* viii. 36, and x. 46, 47). The same thing was done in figure, as shown in *1 Cor.* x. 2 ; *1 S. Peter* iii. 31. As in the flood, eight persons were saved by water, so now baptism of like form saves many. Thus it is concluded that as the sea and the flood consisted of water, so baptism ought to be performed by the same matter, and thus the heresy of Seleucus and Hermias is confuted. S. Augustin (*De Hæresibus*, lxix.) says, " They said that baptism should be without water, because when the baptism of John is compared with that of Christ, the former is said to be performed with water, the latter with the Holy Ghost and with fire (*S. Matt.* iii. 11 ; *S. Mark* i. 8 ; *S. Luke* iii. 16 ; *S. John* i. 26, 33 ; *Acts* xi. 16). But when the baptism of Christ and John are thus compared, the meaning is not that Christ would not baptise with water : but not, like John, with water only. Beside water, which is given outwardly, He would pour out the Holy Ghost, which is shed inwardly ; as was shown by the descent of the tongues of fire on the day of Pentecost, as explained by S. John Damascus (iv. 10, *De Fid. Orthod.*).

The form of baptism is also prescribed in these words. For although it may not be demonstrable from this passage to a curious enquirer that the form which we now use ought to be that of baptism, " I baptise thee in the name



of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost," yet the tradition of the Church approves it. That the Church has always thus baptised is shown by the fact that whoever uses any other form is condemned and excommunicated. The forty-ninth of the Canons of the Apostles excommunicates all bishops and priests who baptise otherwise than in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. By this rule the Marcionites are condemned by S. Irenæus (lib. i.) and by S. Epiphanius (*Hær.* xxxiv.) as not administering true baptism, because they did not use this form. So the baptism of the Paulianists was rejected by the Council of Nice (*Can.* xix.), 6th Council of Carthage (*Can.* xix.), and by S. Innocent I. (*Ep.* xxii. 5). Thus all subtleties by which the force of the words may be eluded are done away : as, if it were said that the meaning is not, "Baptising them in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost," that is, by invoking or appealing to the name, but doing so by the authority of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost ; although we find in many places that baptism was administered in the name of Christ, this was not that he who baptised said, "I baptise thee in the name of Christ," but that he did so by His authority, as shall be shown hereafter. Especially if it be maintained that it does not follow from the above words that the baptiser ought to say, "I baptise thee in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost," for Christ does not say this ; but that it is enough to pour water and say, "In the name of Father, Son, Holy Ghost". Or lastly, if it be asserted that the words may be taken disjunctively and the meaning be, "Baptising in the name of the Father, or of the Son, or of the Holy Ghost," which the facts of the case seem to sanction ; for many of great authority say that the Apostles often baptised in the name of Christ alone. All these astute glosses the one tradition of the Church, that best interpreter of Holy Scripture, does away altogether. For

the question is not how the words may be taken, but how they ought to be taken. They ought to be taken in the sense in which Christ spoke them, and not in that in which everyone may form for himself. The meaning of Christ, as appears from the use and tradition of the Church, was that when the Apostles baptised, they should say, "I baptise thee in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost," or in words that mean the same thing. How it was that they sometimes baptised in the name of Christ alone, as in *Acts* ii. 38, shall be explained elsewhere.

It may be properly asked, why Christ willed Baptism to be administered in this form? Many reasons may be given.

1. To show whence Baptism has its power, namely (1), from the Father who sent His Son to die for men. (2) From the Son who instituted the Sacrament, and by His own blood moistened it as it were, and made it fruitful and efficacious. (3) From the Holy Ghost, who, as water washes the body outwardly, so Himself washes the soul inwardly, sanctifying it.

2. That those who are baptised may not suppose that they have received a merely human gift, and so should divide not only men, as they did who said, "I am of Paul and I am of Apollo" (1 *Cor.* i. 12), but even God Himself as it were, saying, "I am of the Son, I am of the Holy Ghost," as if they were baptised in the name of one Person only.

3. As Fulgentius says (*De fid. Orthod. ad Donat.*), "that men may know that they have the same Author of their regeneration as of their natural birth, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost". The meaning, then, is that the Apostles should testify that they baptised not in their own names, but in that of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; and that what they did was done, not in their own persons, but in the person of God, the Father, the Son, and

the Holy Ghost ; lest it be considered their own baptism, and not the Baptism of God ; as S. Augustin says, in passages without number, of the baptism of John, that it was so called as being done in his own name and person, although by the command and inspiration of God, but not in the person of God ; and therefore that the words of baptism, " In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost," are not only to be referred to the word " baptising," but also to those who baptise.

From these words also the ancient Fathers rightly proved the mystery of the Holy Trinity. By them they answered the Sabellians, who perverted them to prove that Father, Son, and Holy Ghost were one only Person, because Christ did not say, " Baptise in the names," but " in the name ". S. Basil refutes them (*Ep. lxxiv.*), concluding from the same words that, on the contrary, they were three Persons and one Nature, because while the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are mentioned as three distinct Persons, there is only one name of God, and one authorship among them.

From the same words, others have proved the divinity and equality of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, against Arius and the Arians ; for we are not baptised in the name of any creature. So S. Athanasius (*Serm. iii. cont. Arian. ; Orat. de Ætern. ; Subst. F. et SS. cont. Sabell. ;* and *Orat. on S. Luke x. 22, Disput. cont. Ar. in conc. Nicæn. Ep. ad Serap. Profess. reg. Cathol.*), S. Hilary (*De Trin., ii.*), S. Gregory Nazianzen (*Orat. Coram cl. Episcop. de Theolog.*), S. Ambrose (*De Sptu. Sto., i. 14*), Didymus (*De Sptu. Sto., ii.*), Theodoret (*Hær. Fab. v. de Sptu. Sto.*), Fulgentius (*Cont. Arian. and De fid. Orthod., and De Incarnat. et Grat., ix.*).

S. Marks adds to the above words, " He that believeth and is baptised shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be condemned. And these signs shall follow them

that believe. In My name they shall cast out devils," &c., showing the universal effect of baptism. For not only faith, but also baptism saves us, as S. Peter says (1 *Ep.* iii. 21). His words refer not only to those who believe, but also to all who are baptised. For they who believed could not perform such miracles as these before they were baptised. Of this there is a notable example in the Book of Acts (xix. 6). It is not, however, to be understood that all who were baptised could perform these miracles, but, because many would do them, and not only in their own name, but also in the name and to the good of others, Christ, that both their own faith and the faith of others might be strengthened, said generally, "These signs shall follow": not that they would do so in every case, but because it would be necessary for the confirmation of the faith. As if Christ had said, "The faith of those who believe shall be confirmed by miracles". This shall be explained more fully on *S. Mark*.

Verse 20. *Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you.*

After faith and baptism, Christ enjoins the observance of His laws, showing that neither faith nor baptism are sufficient for our salvation unless we keep the laws of God; as Theophylact has observed (*in loc.*).

*And behold I am with you.*

Christ sent the Apostles to teach, as if to a warfare with the entire world. It was to be feared that they might despond under the weight of so great a work and the prevision of future dangers. Christ bids them be strong of heart, and, that they might stand firmly against all dangers, He promised to be with them, and that not too late but in good season. The two words "Behold" and "I" have this force. The former alludes to the

present opportune time, as if it were said, "As soon as need arises I will be unexpectedly with you"; and as the proverb says, "*Deus ex machina*". The word "I" refers to Him who is able to deliver from all dangers. As if the general should say to a soldier in battle, "Be brave and firm, I am here, and am bringing you assistance": as in *S. John* xvi. 33 Christ said to the disciples, "Have confidence, I have overcome the world". "I am with you, who have overcome that world against which you will have to contend. I am with you, in whom the prince of this world has nothing" (*S. John* xiv. 30). "I am with you, whose Father has promised to put all My enemies under My feet as My footstool" (*Ps.* cix. 2).

The opinions of the Ancients on the meaning of this passage differ greatly. Some think that Christ spoke not of His human but of His divine nature, which is everywhere present. Such is the opinion of S. Augustin (*Tract.* lx. on *S. John*), Fulgentius (iii., *Cont. Thrasymund.*, and *Lib. de Incarn. et Grat.*, ix.). But it is clear that Christ promised something less general to the Apostles. He promised to be with them in another sense than that in which He is present with other things and other men.

Others think that He spoke of His Divine Providence, by which God is said to be present to men rather than to inanimate objects, and among men to the just rather than to the unjust; and that, even if He should depart, He would still be with them, because He would send His Holy Spirit in His place to teach them all truth, and direct and govern them as He had promised (*S. John* xiv. 18). Thus S. Cyril of Alexandria (*De Trinit.*, vii.), Salvian (ii., *De Judic. et Provident. Dei*), and S. Leo (*Ep.* li., xcii.) explain these words. This is all true; but the question is not merely what is true, but what is best adapted to the meaning of the passage. It is to be admitted that Christ, as He is God, is everywhere present, but He here

promises another kind of presence to the Apostles. Christ, after He had sent His Holy Spirit, rules His Church even to the end of the world. I do not deny that this is to be concluded from the present passage, as the authors mentioned above rightly say, but the question is not what may be gathered from what He said, but what He intended to say. S. Chrysostom (*Hom. xci. on S. Matt.*), S. Jerome (*Ep. to Damasus*), Prosper (lib. ii., *De Vocat. Gent.*), Bede, and Euthymius appear to have explained the passage most admirably, in saying that Christ speaks not only of His divine but also of His human presence. Not that as man He would be present with the Apostles in His body, but He calls His grace and assistance "His presence". He was about to give them this, not only as He was God, but also as He was man. For it is said that He would be present with them, because He would be their helper in all things; as God is said to have been with Joseph in the pit, because He brought him help in prison (*Wisd. x. 13; Acts vii. 9; Ps. xxxiii. 20*); and in *2 Tim. iii. 11*, where S. Paul says that God delivered him out of all his persecutions; and as Christ was with S. Stephen when he was stoned, when S. Stephen himself saw Him standing in heaven, and stretching out His hand, as it were, to help him (*Acts vii. 56*); and as God said to the Prophet Jeremias when he refused the work appointed (*Jer. i. 8*), "Be not afraid at their presence, for I am with thee to deliver thee, saith the Lord"; and to Ezekiel (*iii. 8, 9*), "I have made thy face stronger than their faces, and thy forehead harder than their foreheads. I have made thy face like an adamant and like flint; fear them not, neither be thou dismayed at their presence; for they are a provoking house"; and as Prosper says (chap. ii., *De Vocat. Gent.*), "When you enter like sheep in the midst of wolves, fear not for your infirmity, but trust in My strength, who will be with you in every work of yours to the end of the

world : not that you may suffer nothing, but, what is much more, to insure you from being overcome by any cruelty of the oppressors. In My power you shall preach, and by Me it shall be that among the enemy and persecutor sons shall be raised up of these stones to Abraham. I will bring to pass what I have taught. I will do what I have promised." Lastly, as, when Christ sent the Apostles to preach the Gospel to the Jews, He promised them His presence and the help of His Holy Spirit (chap. x. 19, 20), so now He promises His aid and presence to those who are sent to teach all nations.

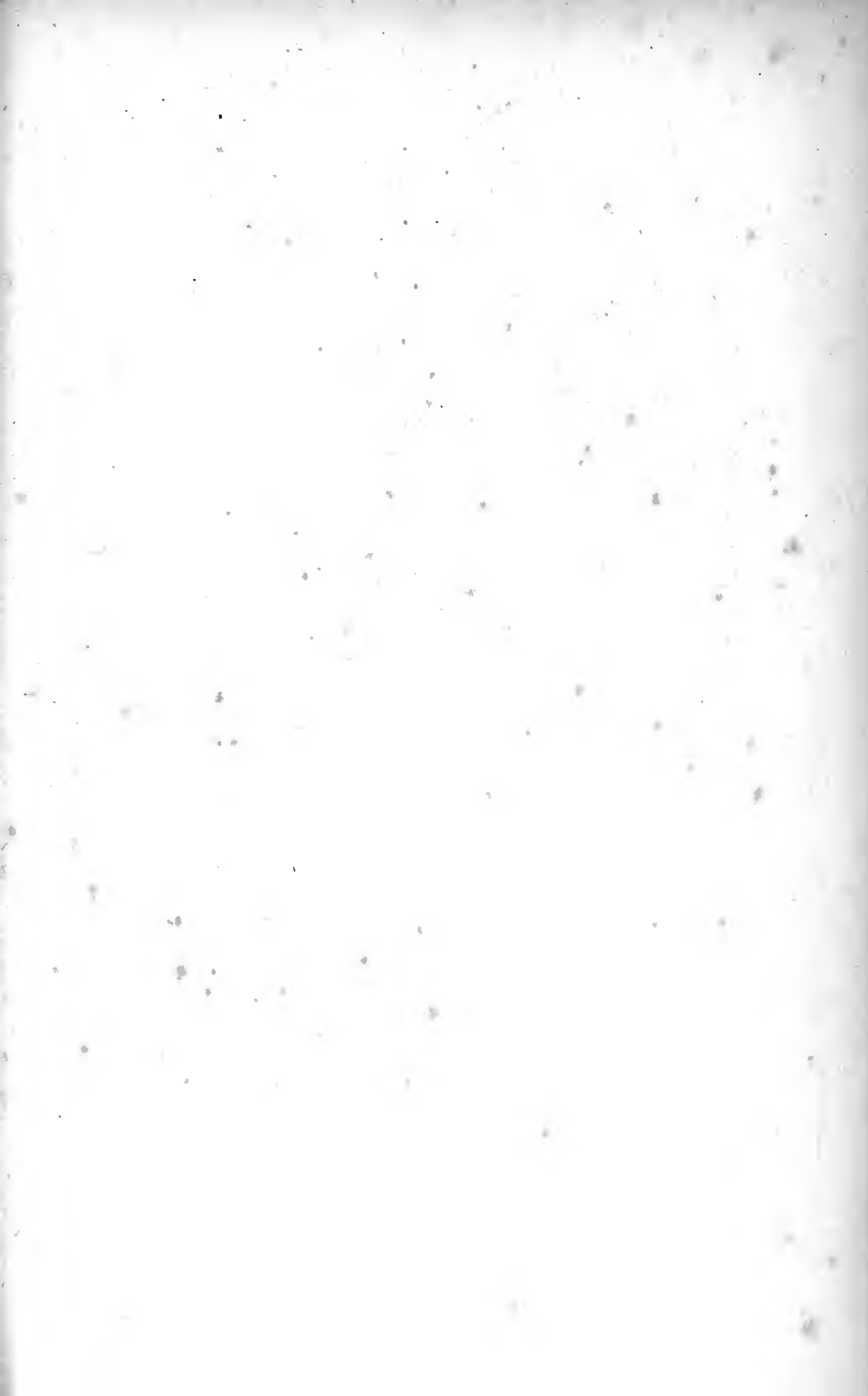
*Even to the consummation of the world.*

Christ shows that He speaks not with the Apostles alone, but with all who should come into their place, and who, He also signifies, shall be Apostles. For the eleven, with whom He spoke, would not live to the end of the world, as S. Augustin (*De Genes. ad litt.*, vi. 8) and Theophylact (*in loc.*) say. This is preferable to S. Jerome's idea. He thinks the meaning of the words to be, that the Apostles would live even to the end of the world, because, though dead in the body, they would always live in the soul. But Christ did not promise to be with them in heaven, where there is no such need of His promise, but on earth, in the dust, in the arena, in the conflict. S. Jerome (*Against Helvidius*) and S. Gregory Nazianzen (*Orat. iv. de Theolog.*) have rightly pointed out that the words "even to" do not exclude the time after the end of the world, as if Christ meant that after that period He would not be with them. On this, *vid.* chap. i. 25. That only is asserted which is doubtful. It was not doubtful that after the end of the world Christ would be with the Apostles in His kingdom ; but it may be doubtful whether He will be with them in conflict, as in *Ps.* cix. 1 the Father says to the Son, " Sit thou at My right hand, until I make

Thy enemies Thy footstool". This does not mean that after His enemies were subdued He should not sit on the right hand of the Father ; nay, He will in a manner sit there the more, for His glory and majesty will be the more displayed. But even if the explanation we have cited be admitted, nothing wrong would follow if we say that the words "even to" (*usque*) do exclude the time that comes after. For in the manner in which Christ said that He would be with the Apostles even to the end of the world : that is, by aiding them in their conflicts : because there will be no warfare then, but they will reign, He will not be with them. But He will be with them in another manner, for they will eat and drink with Him in His kingdom (S. *Luke* xxii. 30).

END OF VOL. II.







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